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Church and State in the American Environment

AN HISTORICAL AND LEGAL SURVEY

by EDWARD DUFF

IT may well be that the next President of the United States will be a Catholic, a fact which would make him unique among the 33 men who have held this high office. The possibility is a matter of serious concern to many millions of Americans. While they are mindful that the federal Constitution declares that ' no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States ', they claim that a sincere Catholic cannot with intellectual honesty accept a fundamental principle of the American political system : the refusal of an official status or even of a favoured position to any religious denomination.

At a recent Chicago symposium on ' The Present Position of Catholics in America ', John Cogley, a prominent Catholic journalist, indicated that there is a wide-spread feeling among non-Catholics ' that the guiding clerics of the church, here as well as abroad, are power-hungry and that their followers are so cowed and so shakily American that they would go to the polls and vote away our traditional liberties if they were strong enough : Let us not kid ourselves : there are many who feel this way '.

In accepting the nomination of the Democratic Party for President in Los Angeles, Senator John F. Kennedy addressed himself boldly (and some thought a bit brashly) to this fear of clerical imperialism. Recalling his 14 years of public service ' supporting complete separation of Church and State ', the nominee (who had earlier taken stands against an Ambassador to the Vatican and federal aid to non-state schools) declared : ' It is not relevant, I want to stress, what some other political or religious leader may have said on this subject. It is not relevant what abuses may have existed in other countries or in other times. It is not relevant what pressures, if any, might conceivably be brought to bear on me. I am telling you now what you are entitled to know : that my decisions on every public policy will be my own—as an American, a Democrat and a free man.' Whether such an affirmation of total independence of any possible clerical counsel, whether such an avowal of faith in the American political arrangement will

allay the doubts of non-Catholics remains to be seen. Senator Kennedy hoped ' that no American, considering the really critical issues facing this country, will waste his franchise by voting either for me or against me solely on account of my religious affiliation '.

The religious affiliation of the Democratic Party's candidate in 1928 certainly counted heavily against him. Alfred E. Smith, elected four times as Governor of the State of New York, was the only other Catholic ever to be nominated for the Presidency by a major political party. Although the prosperity of the times, his advocacy of the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment, his personal cultural deficiencies and his identification with the political machines of the big cities hurt his chances, his Catholicism, historians are agreed, was a major negative factor in his campaign.[1] Since the objections to Senator Kennedy on the ground of the alleged incompatibility of his Catholicism with American political premises are the same that were urged against Governor Smith, it may be profitable to review this aspect of the 1928 campaign as well as its historical roots.

I

It is commonly—and hopefully—held that the notion that Catholicism is a tradition alien and opposed to American culture has abated decisively since the 1928 campaign. After all, Catholics constitute 23 per cent of the nation's population ; they demonstrated their patriotism splendidly in the war (Senator Kennedy was decorated for bravery in action in the Pacific) ; they and their educational institutions have been growing impressively.[2] Senator Kennedy is himself a symbol of this social advance. His great-grand-parents were Irish immigrants ; his grandfather became Mayor of Boston ; his father, a former Ambassador to Great Britain has, through shrewd business skills, become a multi-millionaire ; the Senator is one of the Overseers (a trustee) of Harvard University and an author of a book awarded the Pulitzer literary prize for historical writing.[3] Handsome, highly intelligent and energetic, he would appear to be the refutation of the earlier image of the Catholic as a foreigner, uneducated and shiftless, superstitious and immoral, huddled with his fellow-immigrants in poverty in the teeming tenements of the large cities.

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[1] See Edmund A. Moore, *A Catholic Runs for President*, New York, Ronald Press, 1956 and Oscar Handlin, *Al Smith and His America*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1958.

[2] The current *Official Catholic Directory* indicates that there are 40,871,302 Catholics in the United States, living in 16,896 parishes ; they are served by 53,796 priests ; a total of 8,786,270 youths are in Catholic educational institutions ; last year 146,212 adults entered the Church.

[3] Current biographies of Senator Kennedy include : James MacGregor Burns, *John Kennedy : A Political Profile*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1960 ; Joseph F. Dinneen, *Kennedy Family*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1960 ; Joseph McCarthy, *Remarkable Kennedys*, New York, Dial, 1960.

Such was the image that was exploited to defeat the last Catholic candidate for President. It was an expression of a bigotry known as 'nativism'; its roots go back to the founding of the country. The American colonists were unabashedly anti-Catholic. Patriotism was synonymous with Protestantism, for England was the motherland of the original settlers.[1]

Virginia, for example, incorporated the features of the English established church under the Acts of Supremacy and of Uniformity. By the royal charter of 1606 the colony was authorized to give financial support to ministers, to require church attendance of all settlers and to levy penalties upon all who spoke blasphemy or heresy. No religious beliefs except the legally approved religion could be publicly taught without danger of legal punishment by the State. Somewhat similar forms of Anglican establishments were enacted in the Carolinas and eventually in Maryland and Georgia. Nor may it be thought that the Puritans of New England, victims of religious persecution in England, proposed to allow freedom of religion to others. They objected, to be sure, to the Anglican doctrine that the civil ruler is the supreme authority in religious affairs; they were, moreover, determined to 'purify' religion of all Catholic taint; they made their religious orthodoxy the law of the land in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Only members of the Puritan church could become freemen.

In another group of colonies, New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Georgia, religious freedom varied with changes in the population. Thus, in New York, each town was required to have some kind of a church and to support it, but its denomination was left to the locality. It was sufficient that the preacher be in possession of a certificate of ordination from some Protestant bishop or minister. The example of Maryland is instructive. Intended originally as a haven for persecuted Catholics, it celebrated last year the 325th anniversary of its founding. In a message to the commemorative meeting on 22 November 1959 President Eisenhower sent a message declaring that Americans 'owe a debt of gratitude to the founders of Maryland who welcomed settlers of every creed to her hospitable shore'. The marker unveiled by the Maryland Historical Society reads:

> St. Mary's City, capital of Maryland, 1634–1694. Here, for the first time in America, men and women of different faiths, lived in peace and goodwill, practicing freedom of conscience, according to Lord Baltimore's 'Instruction to Colonists', 1633. Freemen assembled, of various beliefs, changed practice into law by approving 'An Act Concerning Religion' 1649.

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[1] The following paragraphs are based largely on R. F. Butts, *The American Tradition in Religion and Education*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1950.

The Catholic Lord Baltimore's ' Instruction to Colonists ', it was noted at the ceremony, insisted that non-Catholics should be treated ' without discrimination on religious grounds '. Protestants came to Maryland in such numbers, however, that the Puritans were able to pass laws discriminating against Catholics. In 1704 ' An Act to Prevent the Growth of Popery ' was adopted by the legislature.

Another group of colonies, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Delaware, was founded on a larger measure of religious freedom. However, the celebrated historian of bigotry in the United States, Ray A. Billington declares in his *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860* : ' So general was . . . anti-Catholic sentiment in Colonial America that by 1700 a Catholic could enjoy full civil and religious rights only in Rhode Island, and even here it is doubtful what the interpretation of the liberal statutes might have been.'

There were political causes as well as religious grounds for the colonists' anti-Catholicism. Catholic Powers threatened their existence from both north and south. Fear of Spain, established in Florida, induced Georgia to appoint an inspector to make sure that all immigrants were Protestants. Oaths denouncing transubstantiation were required of all office-holders after 1743. With the advent of the eighteenth-century wars between France and England, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York disarmed all Catholics, the last state requiring them to post a bond for good behaviour. Catholics living in the middle colonies were put under close surveillance. North and South Carolina along with New Hampshire imposed a rigid system of oaths to prevent Catholics from holding office or enjoying the free exercise of their religion. Connecticut removed them from the protection of its laws. The Quebec Act of 1774, extending toleration to Catholics there and including in that province the French settlers of the Ohio country, was viewed as an alliance of an autocratic English king with an autocratic Pope to sway Catholic Canadians against Protestant Americans. Some historians contend that the colonists' resentment to the Quebec Act and their fear of Catholic power cemented the divergent religious groups sufficiently to allow them to make war on England. So hostile was the environment of the colonies and so repressive the legislation, that the historian of American Catholicism, Peter Guilday, has written that at the eve of the Revolutionary War the Catholic group, numbering 25,000 of all ages, was threatened with extinction. The decisive support of Catholic France to the Revolution and the demonstrated loyalty of the Catholics to the cause of freedom (one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll, was a Catholic, the wealthiest man in the colonies) changed public opinion considerably. Even so, at the end of the Revolution seven States, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia,

specified Protestant office holders, and other states in their constitutions inflicted additional disabilities on Catholics.

In the general atmosphere of liberty engendered by the successful War of Independence an amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion was added to the federal Constitution by the Congress of the United States in its first session on 25 September 1789. Life became easier for Catholics in the new nation.

It was the great waves of immigration, mostly from Catholic countries, that occasioned the first outbreak of bigotry before the Civil War. Willing to take any kind of work, they drove down wages. Poor and ignorant, and penniless, they often became public charges. The language barrier made them separate and suspect as later in the century and up to World War I, Slavs, Magyars and Italians replaced the original wave of Irish and German immigrants. It became politically profitable to point to the danger to the essentially Protestant culture these immigrants represented. Their membership in an universal church was ground for absurd canards, for example, of political directives emanating from the Vatican. Ignorance of Catholicism made possible the acceptance of stories about the immorality of convents and the moral tyranny of the confessional. As successor to the infamous ' Know-Nothing Party ' (so-called because its members refused to answer any questions) and the American Protective Association of the last century, the post World War I years saw the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan.[1] Catholicism was only one of the objects of this secret organization claiming five million members. It was anti-foreign, anti-Negro, anti-Semitic ; it identified America with the supremacy of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. The poison of its preaching worked mightily against the Catholic nominee of 1928, Governor Smith.

It is undoubtedly true that the climate of opinion has changed a great deal in the intervening years. Will Herberg, a religious sociologist, speaks of ' the transformation of the United States from a Protestant to a three-religion country ' and argues that today a good American citizen is expected to have a religion although it is a matter of general indifference which it is, since any religious affirmation is sufficient to support the moralistic ' American Way of Life '. The change is illustrated tellingly by two books : the 1927 edition of André Siegfried's *America Comes of Age* describes Protestantism as ' our national religion '. The introductory chapter of a 1951 symposium *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century* is entitled ' America at the End of the Protestant Era '.

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[1] See Ray A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 1800–1860, New York, Macmillan, 1938. A current account of Know-Nothingism is Carleton Beals' *Brass Knuckle Crusade*, New York, Hastings House, 1960.

Although it may no longer be accurate to describe the United States as a Protestant country, the heritage of Protestantism (and of elements of Enlightenment thought that were present in the minds of the Founding Fathers) still holds Catholicism suspect and doubts that an authoritarian religion can really be comfortable in the libertarian American environment. Last year a Catholic publishing house invited a small group of well-disposed non-Catholics to set down their impressions of American Catholicism. One of them, Professor Stringfellow Barr, declared : ' It is simply a brutal fact that American non-Catholics are afraid of the Catholic Church, and its behaviour in certain other countries has not reassured them. Fear is a bad basis for good communication, and breeds a kind of cold war.'[1] This fear crystallizes around the issue of the relationship of Church and State and, concretely, on the question of the First Amendment to the federal Constitution which declares : ' Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . '

The charge, based on official church pronouncements, is made persistently that a Catholic cannot give sincere intellectual assent to this fundamental provision of the nation's Bill of Rights, that his religious belief is in inevitable and insoluble conflict with true political allegiance to his country. Senator Kennedy anticipated the challenge by announcing in advance that he believes in the separation of Church and State and by pointing to his public record.[2] To Governor Smith the challenge came in the form of an elaborately courteous ' Open Letter ' from a distinguished New York lawyer, Charles C. Marshall, published in the prominent cultural review, the *Atlantic Monthly*. Analyzing the assertions of the 1885 encyclical *Immortale Dei*, the writer singled out Pope Leo's claim : ' Over the mighty multitude of mankind, God has set rulers with powers to govern, and he has willed that one of them (the Pope) should be the head of all.' Mr Marshall found the logical conclusion to this claim in Leo's statement that the Catholic Church ' deems it unlawful to place the various forms of divine worship on the same

[1] *American Catholics, A Protestant-Jewish View*, edited by Philip Scharper, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1959, p. 18. Another contributor to the same symposium, Professor Robert MaAfee Brown sums up the impression given that ' Catholicism is a kind of monolithic structure '. ' In its crudest form ', he observes, ' this image of the Church suggests that the hierarchy has a uniform opinion on absolutely everything and that the laity believe and do whatever the hierarchy tells them to believe and do about absolutely everything. Every Catholic is a part of this structure, usually called a ' power structure ', and will in no way deviate from what he is told to do ', p. 81.

[2] Speaking to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Senator Kennedy said : ' There is only one legitimate question underlying all the rest : Would you, as President of the United States, be responsive in any way to ecclesiastical pressures or obligations of any kind that might in any fashion influence or interfere with your conduct of that office in the national interest ? I have answered that question many times. My answer was—and is—" No ". Once that question is answered, there is no legitimate issue of my religion. . . . ' *New York Times*, April 22, 1960, p. 16.

[3] The Marshall article appeared in the April, 1927, issue. It is reprinted in *Religion and Politics*, edited by Peter H. Odegard, New York Oceana Publications, 1960.

footing as the true religion'. This being the Catholic position, as diagnosed by Marshall, his concern was normal. 'It is obvious that such convictions', he wrote, 'leave nothing in theory of the religious and moral rights of those who are not Roman Catholics. And, indeed, that is Roman Catholic teaching and the inevitable deduction from Roman Catholic claims, if we use the word "rights" strictly. Other churches, other religious societies, are tolerated in the State, not by right, but by favor.'

How could Smith live at once with the Constitution's prohibition of an established religion, its insistence on holding in equal favour different kinds of religion or no religion and with the statement of Leo XIII : 'It is not lawful for the State, any more than for the individual, either to disregard all religious duties or to hold in equal favour different kinds of religion'? Marshall put a direct question to the Catholic candidate : 'Thus the Constitution declares the United States shall hold in equal favor different kinds of religion or no religion and the Pope declares it is not lawful to hold them in equal favor. Is there not here a quandary for that man who is at once a loyal churchman and a loyal citizen?'

There is no evidence that Charles Marshall was particularly prejudiced. His professed purpose was to enable Governor Smith to explain what seemed a conflict of Catholicism and American constitutional law : Marshall did not exploit against the Catholic candidate the standard reference book on the subject, *The State and the Church*, written in 1922 by John A. Ryan, Professor of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America, in collaboration with Moorhouse F. X. Millar, S.J.[1] The book set forth the traditional confessional state as the ideal form of relationship between Church and State. In this ideal arrangement the State, as the political instrument of society, would profess the Catholic faith and, in consequence, would act to advance Catholicism while discouraging, if not repressing, false religions.

Father Ryan's argumentation may be judged from this series of quotations from three consecutive pages of his book as stitched together by Paul Blanshard, the most vocal of the current Catholicism as-a-political-peril school, to indicate that freedom of religious worship would not be available to non-Catholics in any state based on Catholic principles :

> If these [religious practices] are carried on within the family, or in such inconspicuous manner as to be an occasion neither of scandal nor of perversion to the faithful, they may properly be tolerated by the State . . . Quite distinct from the performance of false religious worship and preaching to the members of the erring sect is the propagation of the false doctrine among Catholics. This could become a source of injury, a positive menace, to the religious welfare of true believers.

[1] Published by Macmillan, New York, 1922.

> Against such an evil they have a right of protection by the Catholic State . . . If there is only one true religion, and if its possession is the most important good in life for States as well as individuals, then the public profession, protection, and promotion of this religion and the legal prohibition of all direct assaults upon it, becomes one of the most obvious and fundamental duties of the State.[1]

Embarrassed by the use made of his expression of the traditional Catholic teaching against the Catholic candidate, Mgr Ryan wrote to the *New York World :*

> While all this is very true in logic and in theory, the event of its practical realization in any state or country is so remote in time and in probability that no practical man will let it disturb his equanimity or affect his attitude toward those who differ from him in religious faith.

Governor Smith was disposed to ignore the Marshall challenge, so preposterous did the alleged conflict of his religion and his patriotism seem to this self-educated son of Irish immigrants. Ultimately at the strong urging of his political advisors, Franklin D. Roosevelt prominent among them, he reluctantly addressed himself to the task of composing a reply, summarizing his creed ' as an American Catholic '.[2] His first riposte was direct : ' So little are these matters of the essence of my faith that I, a devout Catholic since childhood, never heard of them until I read your letter.' He felt compelled to minimize the authority of the pronouncements invoked by Marshall, asking

> By what right do you ask me to assume responsibility for every statement that may be made in any encyclical letter? As you will find in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. V. p. 414) these encyclicals are not articles of our faith. The Syllabus of Pope Pius IX which you quote on the possible conflict between Church and State, is declared by Cardinal Newman to have no dogmatic force ! You seem to think that Catholics must be all alike in mind and in heart, as though they had been poured into and taken out the same mould. You have no more right to ask me to defend as part of my faith every statement coming from a prelate than I should have to ask you to accept as an article of your religious faith every statement of an Episcopal bishop, or of your political faith every statement of a President of the United States.

He declared unabashedly :

> I believe in absolute freedom of conscience for all men and in equality of all churches, all sects, and all beliefs before the law as a matter of right and not as a matter of favor. I believe in the absolute separation of Church and State and in the strict enforcement of the provisions of

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[1] *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1949, p. 71. The composite quotation is from Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 35–36, 37.

[2] The Smith reply in *The Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1927. It is found in *Religion and Politics*, p. 62 ff.

the Constitution that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. I believe that no tribunal of any church has any power to make any decree of any force in the law of the land, other than to establish the status of its own communicants within its own church.

Governor Smith found support for his position in aspects of American Catholicism, its historic stance on the issue of religious freedom. He read the record :

> The American prelates of our Church stoutly defend our constitutional declaration of equality of all religions before the law. Cardinal O'Connell has said : ' Thus to every American citizen has come the blessed inheritance of civil, political, and religious liberty safeguarded by the American Constitution . . . the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience '. Bishop England, referring to our Constitution, said: 'Let the Pope and the Cardinals and all the powers of the Catholic world united make the least encroachment on that Constitution, we will protect it with our lives. Summon a General Council—let that Council interfere in the mode of our electing but an assistant to a turnkey of a prison—we deny the right, we reject the usurpation.' Archbishop Ireland has said : ' The Constitution of the United States reads : Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. It was a great leap forward on the past of the new nation towards personal liberty and the consecration of the rights of conscience.' He also said : ' To priest, to Bishop, or to Pope (I am willing to consider the hypothesis) who should attempt to rule in matters civil and political, to influence the citizen beyond the range of their own orbit of jurisdiction that are the things of God, the answer is quickly made. Back to your own sphere of rights and duties, back to the things of God.' Archbishop Dowling, referring to any conceivable union of Church and State, says : ' So many conditions for its accomplishment are lacking in every government of the world that the thesis may well be relegated to the limbo of defunct controversies.' Archbishop Ireland again said : ' Religious freedom is the basic life of America, the cement running through all its walls and battlements, the safeguard of its peace and prosperity. Violate religious freedom against Catholics, our swords are at once unsheathed. Violate it in favor of Catholics, against non-Catholics, no less readily do they leap from the scabbard.'

II

It was almost snidely that Smith observed to Marshall : ' I think you have taken your thesis from this limbo of defunct controversies.' The allusion here is to the celebrated distinction of ' thesis-hypothesis ' elaborated by the Jesuit editors of *Civiltà Cattolica* in the wake of the controversy following the publication of the *Syllabus Errorum* of 1864.

According to the 'thesis' the Catholic Church, the unique, divinely created vehicle of salvation of mankind, is superior in nature, purpose and destiny to the State and is entitled to the assistance of the political instrument of society in the propagation of the gospel and the suppression of heresy. According to the 'hypothesis' the Church, being unable to impose its claims, provisionally tolerates erroneous opinions and condones religious freedom as the lesser evil.

The consistent and uninterrupted voice of the *magisterium* of the Church in the United States from the beginning appears unaware of the necessity of any such distinction, the hierarchy giving full-hearted approval of the political arrangement set forth in the Constitution whereby the State declares itself neutral in the matter of religious belief.

In 1784, seven years before the adoption of the First Amendment, John Carroll, first bishop of the United States, declared openly: 'We have all smarted heretofore under the lash of an established church and shall therefore be on our guard against every approach toward it.' He was pleased to note that: 'thanks to genuine spirit and Christianity, the United States has banished intolerance from its system of Government. Freedom and independence, acquired by the united efforts, and cemented by the mingled blood of Protestant and Catholic fellow citizens, should be equally enjoyed by all.' The outstanding loyalty of Bishop John England of Charleston, South Carolina, was acknowledged by the Holy See which commissioned him Papal Nuncio to negotiate a concordat with Haiti. Yet, addressing the Hibernian Society of Savannah, Georgia, on Saint Patrick's Day, 1824, the bishop did not blush to plead: 'May God long preserve the liberties of America from the union of any church with any state.' On another occasion, Bishop England proclaimed: 'I am convinced that a total separation from the temporal government is the most natural and safest state for the Church in any place where it is not, as in the Papal territory, a complete government of churchmen.' In an argument over parochial school support in 1850 Archbishop John Hughes referred to 'that justly obnoxious union of Church and State'. Preaching in his titular church in Rome in 1909 Cardinal Gibbons asserted: 'As a citizen of the United States, without closing my eyes to our defects as a nation, I proclaim, with a deep sense of pride and gratitude, and in this great capital of Christendom, that I belong to a country where the civil government holds over us the aegis of protection without interfering in the legitimate exercise of our sublime mission as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.... American Catholics rejoice in our separation of Church and State. And I can conceive of no combination of circumstances likely to arise which would make a union desirable either to Church or State ... We know the blessings of our present arrangement; it gives us liberty and binds together priests and people in a

union better than that of Church and State . . . Other countries, other manners ; we do not believe our system adapted to all conditions ; we leave it to Church and State in other lands to solve their problems for their own best interest. For ourselves we thank God we live in America, in this happy country of ours, to quote Mr [Theodore] Roosevelt, where 'religion and liberty are natural allies.' It was a sentiment that was echoed by Archbishop Ireland and Spaulding among others. Quoting Cardinal Gibbons's words forty years later, Cardinal Cushing declared : 'So spoke in his day Cardinal Gibbons. So do we speak in our day.'

In 1948 Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati endeavoured to set all doubts on this point to rest. Speaking as the Chairman of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (and, therefore, as spokesman for the entire hierarchy), he made this solemn declaration on 25 January 1948 : 'If tomorrow Catholics constituted a majority in our country, they would not seek a union of church and state. They would then, as now, uphold the Constitution and all its amendments, recognizing the moral obligation imposed on all Catholics to observe and defend it.'

Archbishop McNicholas's reassurance has been very recently repeated by his successor as Chairman of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and, thus, spokesman for the American hierarchy, the Most Reverend Karl J. Alter, Archbishop of Cincinnati. Insisting that 'there is no doctrine of the Catholic Church which is in conflict with the Constitution of the United States and, hence, there can be no conflict between the obligations imposed by the Church and those imposed by the Constitution', Archbishop Alter gave the following pledge : 'The fear that we as Catholics will use religious toleration here to gain the ascendancy in our country and then, having achieved political hegemony, proceed to deprive our fellow citizens of freedom of speech in religion, freedom of conscience, or impose our convictions upon them willy-nilly, is utterly unwarranted by any doctrine of the Catholic Church, as well as by the consistent pronouncements of the American hierarchy. We seek no privileged status ; we proclaim our full adherence to the provisions of the Constitution as of now as well as for the future.'[1]

It is small wonder, then, that Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, asserted in the course of a symposium on Pope Leo XIII, held at Loyola University, Chicago, on 18 March : 'As far as the United States is concerned, I feel that it is a true interpretation of the feelings of the hierarchy and of American Catholics in general to say that they are well satisfied with their Constitution and

[1] *The Sign*, July, 1960, pp. 11, 14, 65.

pleased with the fundamental freedom which their Church enjoys ; in fact, they believe that this freedom is to a large extent responsible for the expansion and consolidation of the Church in this great country. Whether they remain a minority or become a majority, I am sure American Catholics will not jeopardize their cherished religious freedom in exchange for a privileged position.'[1]

Surveying this uninterrupted and energetic endorsement of the principle of religious freedom written into the First Amendment, Mgr John Tracy Ellis concluded : ' When one considers that the position which I have been outlining has been held from 1784, when the future Archbishop Carroll was found publicizing his acceptance of the American pattern of Church-State relations, to 1948, when the late Archbishop McNicholas made unmistakably clear his wholehearted avowal of the separation of Church and State in this country—and that no variation from this theme has been heard from an American Catholic bishop—this should constitute an argument entitled to respect'.[2]

The meaning of the same record was read by Professor Henry Steele Commager in his *The American Mind* in this fashion : ' Whatever conclusion may be drawn from a scrutiny of Catholic doctrine, the fact was that Catholicism had flourished as a major religion for three-quarters of a century without raising serious difficulties except in the imagination of men and that democratic institutions seemed as sound when the church numbered twenty-four million members as they had been when it counted its communicants by the hundred thousand. . . . It might indeed be maintained that the Catholic Church was, during this period [since 1889], one of the most effective of all agencies for democracy and Americanization.'[3]

How explain this loyal acceptance of a political philosophy whose Constitution, while not employing the phrase, imposes a separation of church and state, an arrangement deplored in Papal documents ? The purpose of the First Amendment and the temper of its declaration of distinction of jurisdiction explains this positive allegiance of the American Catholic mind to the public law of the land.

The First Amendment to the Constitution—prohibiting a national Established Church and guaranteeing freedom of religious expression—does not express an ideology. It represents a pragmatic disposition.[4] Abundant and unassailable historical evidence demonstrates, as Mr Justice Story attests in his fundamental study on the Constitution,

[1] ' Leo XIII and Human Liberty ', *Catholic Mind*, LVIII (July—August, 1960), p. 298.

[2] ' Church and State : An American Catholic Tradition ', *Harper's*, CCVII (November, 1953), p. 67. The earlier quotations from the American hierarchy on religious freedom are taken from this article.

[3] New York, Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 193.

[4] The classical historical survey of the subject is Anson Phelps Stokes' *Church and State in the United States*, New York, Harper, 1950. A brilliant brief analysis is Wilfrid Parsons' *The First Freedom*, New York, Declan X. McMullen, 1948.

that : ' The real object of the Amendment was to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment which should give to a hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.' Behind this determination was the concern to leave to the separate states their preferences in matters of the preferred religion. (For many years several did, Massachusetts disestablishing its Congregational Church only in 1833 and to this day New Hampshire by its Constitution may legislate for ' adequate support of public Protestant teachers of piety '.) In addition, there was undoubtedly resentment over the disloyalty of the established Anglican churches in several of the colonies during the Revolution. Also actively present as a factor were the views of the very influential James Madison who, typical of many of his Virginia friends, conceived of religion as being of a wholly private character. That framers of the Amendment did not conceive of the Amendment as an expression of indifference to religion nor as a mandate against non-discriminatory cooperation between the state and religion is evident from the action of the U.S. Senate which, having agreed on the language of the Amendment, appointed a committee ' to wait on the President of the United States to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer be observed '. Archbishop Alter emphazises the crux of the matter, observing : ' The First Amendment actually limits the jurisdiction of the government by denying it any competence in the field of religion.'

It is important to remember that the American Revolution is *not* a product of the French Revolution whose cause and inspiration and consequences were essentially different. The writers of the American Constitution were not nineteenth century liberals, promoting a policy of religious oppression in the name of religious freedom, using the slogan of the separation of Church and State to expel religious orders, confiscate church property and penalize the Church's charitable activity.[1] They had no desire to separate religion from public life, for they had founded

[1] The rationale and the methodology of Liberalism are thus described by Professor H. A. Rommen : ' The basis for the separation was not solicitude for the common good, it was not the desire for peace among a plurality of churches and sects, but rather an adherence to the philosophical tenets of rationalist liberalism as a kind of civil religion in Rousseau's meaning. Supernatural faith is here simply denied. The Christian values of morality and the divine law are publicly declared either a myth, irreconcilable with modern science or with the proletarian revolution, or they are said to be only a propaganda instrument of clerical arrogance and of political anti-democratic reaction. Social and political life consequently are to be ruled without consideration of absolute Christian and divinely revealed law, but exclusively by the immanent rules of political or social or even proletarian science. It can easily be seen that such a " religion " of indifferentism, even of anti-Christian rationalist scientism, in the new laic religion of the state, when imposed upon the citizens in public universities and schools, in the laws and administrative practices, makes of the state an instrument of the rationalist unbelievers of the intellectual ruling class to destroy the traditional religion of the still Christian people. The new religion becomes the public religion of the state while the Catholic religion is declared to be exclusively and wholly a private affair of the citizen '. *The State in Catholic Thought*, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1945, pp. 600-601.

their claims to justice in the *Declaration of Independence* on the fact that 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights'. That is why the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag declares that we are 'one nation, under God', why our money has always carried the emblem 'In God we trust', why the crier opens sessions of the Supreme Court with the call 'God save the United States and this Honorable Court', why each session of Congress is opened with a prayer, why the students at the national military academies have always been required to attend the chapel of their religious faith. In short, as the Supreme Court ruled in a case releasing children from school for religious instruction, 'we are a religious people whose institutions suppose a belief in a Supreme Being.'[1] It is the affirmation of the American political system that, by a self-denying ordinance, the government may (and in a modern pluralistic society should) abstain from recognizing or favouring any particular form of faith followed by this 'religious people'.[2]

V

The question is inescapable and American Catholics are constantly confronted with it: is our acceptance of religious freedom a species of superficial opportunism, of intellectual dishonesty and of political Machiavellism as the 'thesis-hypothesis' distinction would seem to suggest? Can the Church which is, by definition, dogmatically intolerant, acknowledge religious liberty on principle and not merely on account of compulsion or expediency?

To be sure, the Catholic Church which announces itself to be the repository of revealed truth cannot be expected to cease insisting on the obligation of each person to seek and pursue the truth, an obligation limiting the notion of freedom of conscience. 'You are not morally free', the Church declares, '*not* to believe, whatever your personal rights to pursue your present religious convictions.' There is a distinction here between ontological truth and personal freedom which was underscored in a sentence of Pius XI's encyclical on Fascism, *Non abbiamo bisogno*: 'We are both proud and happy to fight for the

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[1] 343 U.S. 312. In July of this year the Maryland State Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision to deny a notary's commission to an avowed atheist when he refused to take an oath affirming his belief in God, declaring: 'It seems clear under our Constitution disbelief in a supreme being, and the denial of any moral accountability for conduct, not only renders a person incompetent to hold public office, but to give testimony, or to serve as a juror'.

[2] John Cogley has noted: 'Almost everyone would agree that the American people are a "religious people", in the sense that neither by conviction, tradition, nor law are we aggressively anti-religious. As to what being a "religious people" consists in, disagreement is almost as wide as the varieties of opinions about religion which thrive in our society. Since there is no concensus about the meaning of religion, there can be no concensus about a "religious people".'

freedom of consciences (la liberta *delle coscienze*), and not, as I was inadvertently led to say, for freedom of conscience (la liberta *di coscienza*), an ambiguous expression that is all too often wrongly used to mean *complete* independence of conscience, which is absurd when applied to a soul created and redeemed by God.' The same distinction was stressed last year by Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna in his widely-read lecture on tolerance : ' When one affirms that truth is objective, by that very fact he admits of a distinction between truth itself and the act by which the individual yields to truth. Hence, in recognizing the objectivity of truth, the individual is, at the same time, establishing the right to personal freedom.'[1] Further striking quotations might be offered from Cardinals Feltin, Griffin and Cushing as well as from Bishop François Charrière of Fribourg, traditional centre of Catholic Social Thought. The Church has always insisted on religious freedom in that from the beginning she has forbidden—and termed a sin—any forced conversion. The new emphasis to be noted is on the sacredness of the person as the basis of his subjective right to freedom of conscience.

Those inclined to consider the strictures of nineteenth century Popes, not least those of Leo XIII, on religious freedom of permanent appositeness might well ponder the words of the same Pope : ' It is the special property of human institutions and laws that there is nothing in them so holy and salutary but that custom may alter it, or overthrow it, or social habits bring it to naught. So in the Church of God, in which changeableness of discipline is joined with absolute immutability of doctrine, it happens not rarely that things which were once relevant or suitable become in the course of time out of date, or useless, or even harmful.' In his 1955 discourse to the International Historical Congress Pope Pius XII, for example, recognized explicitly that the medieval idea of a Church having power over the state ' was time-conditioned and did not represent fundamental Catholic principles in the matter '.[2]

[1] The *Catholic Mind*, LVII (January–February, 1960), p. 18. Also in *Documentation Catholique*, March 15, 1959.

[2] Discourse to Tenth Congress of Historical Sciences, *Documentation Catholique*, October, 1955, pp. 1222–5. The English moralist, Canon L. L. McReavy explains the current conception of the roles of Church and State : ' Given the objective truth of the deposit of faith, the Church, its guardian, must of necessity be dogmatically intolerant. She can never compromise with religious or moral error on the intellectual plane, or make any concession in principle to the religious indifferentism of the liberalist thesis. But because dogmatic intolerance is proper to the Church, it does not follow that it is proper also to the State, or even that the State should lend a hand in enforcing it at the civil level. The Church has a divine mission to teach and defend the truth, but no such mission has been given to the State. Catholic doctrine has always rejected Caesaropapism and insisted on the distinction between the things that are Caesar's and those that are God's. Even in a predominantly Catholic country, the proper duties of the State are defined and limited by the requirements of the purpose for which God has given it authority, the promotion of the common temporal good. It has no proper mission in the religious field, and therefore any assistance which it may afford its Christian subjects in the fulfillment of their dual citizenship is a subsidiary activity which must be subordinated to its essential function '. *Tablet* (June 4, 1960), p. 533.

An example of such adaptation and development emerged during the press conference last 30 October when Cardinal Tardini, Papal Secretary of State, was explaining the preparations for the coming General Council. One point, as reported by the *Tablet* (London) is of interest: 'Asked whether invitations would be sent to the governments of foreign states as was the custom in the past, Cardinal Tardini replied that ' times have changed ' and that the presence of the mighty of the earth, instead of adding dignity to the proceedings, might well provide an incongruous touch . . . The Press will be kept fully informed about the proceedings, not least to prevent reporters from guessing or reporting rumors '.

Moreover, the historical context of Papal pronouncements must always be kept in mind. Replying to the question ' Where can one find the most authoritative and clearest statement of Catholic principles in relation to the subjects we have discussed ? ' Archbishop Alter replied : ' Not in the much quoted writings or encyclicals of Boniface VIII or in the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX ; not in the sense that their teaching is rescinded, but in the sense that they cannot be rightly understood outside their historical context. They are couched in a language of polemics as well as of exposition.'[1] Thus, the editor of the *Tablet* (London) notes, the Syllabus of Errors of 1864 ' although it used general language, [it] arose in an Italian context, and was aimed primarily by an encircled Pope against the followers of Mazzini and Cavour, and meant by progress and the modern civilization with which the Roman Pontiff had no obligation to reconcile himself what Mazzini and Cavour meant by those high, vague words. But the document went around the world as a declaration of war on a far broader front than its authors ever intended, absorbed as they were in the death-throes of the temporal power after some twelve hundred years.'[2]

Pope Pius XII insisted on the Church's ' vital law of continuous adaptation' and on her refusal to become so identified with a particular historical moment as to be incapable of further dynamic development. The Church's experience under modern totalitarian régimes and her increasing contact with the competing cultures of the globe have occasioned a new openness to changing conditions. Thus, Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message of 1944, popularly entitled in English, ' On Democracy ', recommended ' social forms which can permit and ensure full personal responsibility in things temporal as well as in things eternal '.

[1] *The Sign*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[2] June 4, 1960, p. 532. The writer, commenting on the *Osservatore Romano's* insistence on the hierarchy's' right and duty to intervene ' in the political field to guide its flock, continued : ' The government of the Universal Church must be based somewhere, and it was providentially placed from the beginning in the city which has been the chief centre of human government, among the people with the greatest genius for that rare and invaluable art. But it is a natural consequence that it very often happens that decisions are flashed round the world which to be understood have to be seen in the Italian context which has brought them about '.

Among the fundamental rights of man, the Holy Father listed 'the right to worship God in private and in public and to continue this with charitable works of religious nature'. The painful experience of changes in historical circumstances has convinced the Church that the denial of fundamental human rights to all men inevitably leads to a restriction of the freedom of the Church in the public life of a nation and is immensely dangerous to her apostolic mission.

The harsh reality of the jack-boot state, invading every domain of personal life, imposing its organized ideology as a substitute for religious faith, has made the Church think kindlier of the democratic régime with its self-imposed limitation of function and official neutrality on religious questions. It is not without significance that when French integrists complained of the inclusion of the adjective *laique* in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, the hierarchy reminded them that the word does not necessarily have a pejorative meaning. In a conference to the leaders of Catholic Action last 31 December in the context of the debate on school aid in the National Assembly, Bishop Guerry of Cambrai explained the distinction by employing two different words.

> Applied to the question of education, a public function of the State, *la laicité* means that this public service is non-denominational, that it is neutral and need not, therefore, take a position for or against religion. The *laicité* of the State manifests itself in the practical order then by an impartiality towards the different religious groups, recognizing the pluralism of the nation. A wholly different thing is the *laicisme d'Etat*, that is to say, a philosophical doctrine based on agnosticism, materialism and ideological atheism which is to serve as the official inspiration of the State in all its public functions including that of education. This *laicisme d'Etat* is the opposite of the genuine *laicité d'Etat*.

The Church's increasing contacts with the different civilizations of the world was certainly in the mind of Pope Pius XII when he addressed the Catholic Jurists of Italy on 6 December, 1953. The Holy Father deplored the transfer of proposition that 'error has no rights' from the metaphysical plane to the sphere of state legislation where it may offend against the common good. 'God Himself', noted the Holy Father, 'permits error and evil . . . the duty of suppressing moral and religious error cannot, therefore, be the final norm for action'.

This papal denial of the government's right to restrict religious freedom cannot, of course, be converted into an affirmative argument establishing freedom of religion as an universal principle. It can be honestly reported, however, that the clear trend of theological thinking in the Church is towards such an opinion. It is significant that one of the articles which the editor of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* felt needed revision after fifty years was that on Church and State. Appearing as a

fascicule, issued as a supplement to the 1908 edition, it reports the current preoccupations of Catholic theologians who are striving to clarify the distinctions between the inner reality of religion and its cultural encrustation. It may well be that the catalyst will be a more acute analysis of the concept of ' the community ', the society of voluntary groups intervening, in logic, between the person and the state, a concept not over-familiar to students of Roman and Napoleonic law. In any case, the direction the debate is taking has been assessed by an outsider, Dr A. F. Carillo de Albornoz, a research specialist at the World Council of Churches' headquarters at Geneva. In the course of a 95-page survey of contemporary Catholic discussion, published as *Roman Catholicism and Religious Liberty*, Dr Carillo observes :

> Roman Catholic literature representing this modern tendency has lately been so voluminous and of such quality that it would be an understatement to say that, for one book or article in favor of the traditional doctrine, ten have been published defending universal religious freedom as ' thesis ' ; and should note that they have all been published with the ' nihil obstat ' of the Roman Catholic authorities. As is well known, the ' nihil obstat ' does not always mean that the book approved reflects exactly the official Roman Catholic doctrine on the matter, but it does always mean that nothing in such book is against the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.[1]

Dr Carillo concludes his inquiry :

> We think that there is evidence enough of the fact that :
>
> (*a*) Many Roman Catholic theologians, in many countries, defend a new theory in favor of complete religious freedom in principle, which is quite different and even opposite to the old doctrine of ' thesis ' and ' hypothesis '.
>
> (*b*) This theory has in no way been condemned but, on the contrary, is supported by very important members of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy ; and
>
> (*c*) This theory is not a tactical variant of the old doctrine for reasons of opportunism, but another radical and irreducible doctrinal position which is very sincerely and fiercely fighting the old one.[2]

The study of Dr Carillo has been circulated in influential quarters in the United States. Its conclusions have been welcomed by American Catholics as useful to dispel the doubts and confusions endemic in the minds of non-Catholics. At the Chicago symposium in mid-June on ' The Present Position of Catholics in America ' Bishop John King

[1] Published by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, p. 8.
[2] Ibid., p. 2.

Mussio of Steubenville, Ohio, remarked that the American Catholic has learned to give ' to the service of his country the same spirit of loyal service he gives to his Church . . . [he] could never properly recognize as the authority of God what would deprive men, no matter what their background, race or persuasion, of their inherent right to worship God as conscience dictates'. 'Hence his surprise', commented the Jesuit weekly *America* on 2 July, ' at expressions of fear by some of his fellow Americans over possible encroachments by the Church on traditional American liberties. Even less comprehensible to the American Catholic is the fondness manifested by some of his coreligionists abroad for interpreting or discussing American domestic affairs in terms of the far less satisfactory history of Church-State or intercredal relations in other lands.'

VI

Freedom of religion, whatever its observance, is today conceded to be a fundamental human right. It is inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and incorporated in the Charter of Human Rights of the Council of Europe which, incidentally, Sweden and Norway had to sign with a reservation because of the discriminatory clauses of their Constitutions. What the ideological underpinnings of such a right are, however, is not clear. For the jurist, I suppose, the phenomenon of the prevalence of such guarantees in modern political constitutions gives the right recognition in international public law. The Protestant world community, as institutionalized in the World Council of Churches, never systematically studied Church-State relations. Its 1948 Amsterdam Assembly listed as primary characteristics of genuine religious freedom, ' the rights of all men to hold and change their faith, to express it, in worship and practice, to each and persuade others, and to decide on the religious education of their children '[1] but the Director of the World Council's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, O. Frederick Nolde, concedes that the approach is ' juridical ' and insisted at that time that ' there is an immediate need for the development of a Christian view on human rights in forms which will apply to all men '.[2] No great progress is evident. American Protestantism seems merely to have given theological canonization to the political theory formulated in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

Working out a satisfactory theology of religious toleration will be an immense task that will have to draw out and synthesize a vast amount of Catholic teaching on the freedom of the act of faith, on the scope

[1] *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, New York, Harper, 1948, p. 93.
[2] ' Freedom of Religion and Related Human Rights ' in *The Church and the International Disorder*, New York, Harper, 1948, p. 148.

of the State, on the primacy of the individual's conscience and on the modes of apostolic action available to the Church in our times. The task is not an easy one because, as Canon McReavy notes, ' The problem is itself relatively modern and the theology of it is still in process of being worked out '. The issues involved are not simple ones but they are crucially important. ' The fundamental question we have to answer ', writes Gabriel Marcel very pertinently, ' is that of knowing on what principle it is possible to base a religious freedom that will be truly a contra-intolerance and that, nevertheless, will not be the expression or the testimony of scepticism, but instead the living incarnation of a faith .'[1] Formulating a theology of tolerance is a task Father Max Pribilla, S.J., thought urgent ten years ago. ' Above all ', he remarked, ' Catholics should consider it a primordial task to come to a theoretical and practical agreement which—at least in respect of more difficult issues—does not exist to date. This lack of unanimity weakens their inner unity and render their outward defence more difficult.'[2]

American Catholics are eager to see such a theology elaborated not because they sense that it would make the candidacy of Senator Kennedy more attractive to their fellow citizens. A recent article by a regular contributor to *America*, Donald McDonald, makes an earnest plea for ' A Theology of Tolerance.'[3] The statements of the hierarchy insisting on their permanent and unconditional acceptance of the Constitution with its separation of Church and State provisions (and this even should Catholics constitute a majority of the nation) is found by the writer to be ' not enough '. Before the Holy See takes a position, the writer observes, theologians must first attend to their traditional task of elaboration and explanation. They will have a clear set of facts to start from : the uninterrupted and the consistent declarations of the American hierarchy extolling, as fully satisfying the demands of Catholic teaching and as fruitful for religion, a régime in which responsibility for the growth of the Kingdom of God is left uniquely in the hands of his assigned agents, unassisted by Caesar's functionaries.

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[1] ' Phénoménologie et dialectique de la tolerance ', *Du refus a l'invocation*, Paris, 1940, p. 277.

[2] ' Dogmatische Intoleranz und bürgerliche Toleranz ', *Stimmen der Zeit*, 144 (April, 1949), pp. 28–29.

[3] *America* (July 9, 1960), p. 437.

Huxley and Humanism

by M. B. CROWE

THIS year sees the centenary of the great debate on creation and evolution between T. H. Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce. The *Observer* (17 July 1960) marked the occasion by publishing two articles on 'Science and God', one by Huxley's grandson the distinguished biologist Sir Julian Huxley, and the other by the well-known Anglican divine Dr E. L. Mascall. Sir Julian wields a graceful pen to make the most alarming assumptions seem reasonable and tolerant, but he also administers some direct shocks. 'Let us remember', he says at an early stage in his argument, 'that god is a hypothesis. This comes as a shock to many, but it is true'. Christians may well be shocked; but they ought not to be surprised, for the denial of God and, consequently, of the supernatural, of grace and of man's eternal destiny, is characteristic of the philosophical system of which Sir Julian Huxley is one of the foremost exponents. In a broadcast lecture some years ago on 'Why I am a Scientific Humanist' he began:

> I dislike labels; but if it is necessary to sport one, I prefer to be labelled a scientific humanist. . . . The Humanist is one whose real faith is in the possibilities of human experience and achievement, rather than in a Supernatural Being or a revealed religion. There were humanists in the Renaissance, and also among the Ancient Greeks. But modern humanism has a distinctive character, which derives in general from the growth of science.[1]

The burden of the *Observer* article is, as one would expect, that there is an irreconcilable opposition between theology and science. Religion Huxley is prepared to recognize as 'a natural phenomenon that can be scientifically investigated' like any superstition or irrational form of behaviour. But theology is quite another matter. Science and theology he carefully so defines as to make them mutually exclusive. Theology 'implies a system of thought deriving from belief in a personal God, in the human soul as immortal and in the incarnation of the Son of God as the saviour of mankind from the effects of the Fall'. In passing it might be noticed that this definition takes no account of natural theology, the science of God available to unaided human reason. Scientific humanists frequently prefer to regard all knowledge of God

[1] In *Philosophy and Ethics* (International University Society, 1958), p. 282.

as dependent on revelation ; for then Faith can be more easily made to look like credulity and the propositions of revealed theology can be more surely discredited by being associated with irrational beliefs. Science, on the other hand, is ' the knowledge gained by the scientific method of publicly recorded observation, hypothesis and checking by further observation and, where possible, experiment '. If one accepts this excessively narrow conception of science, with its naturalistic assumption that only what is available to human experience—meaning sense-experience—exists and can be investigated, then, of course, there is no supernatural and no theology. But the proposition that what cannot be experienced by the senses does not exist is not a proposition that can be proved. It is a dogma in the pejorative sense given to that term by scientific humanists.

The contrast is now between theology in which ' the universe and its evolution are secondary to a central and eternal god and are assumed to be products of or dependent on divine operation ' and science where ' gods are peripheral phenomena produced by evolution '. Theology, furthermore, is a closed system having a

> highly organised theoretical structure based on a combination of an elaborate god-theory with a subsidiary but equally elaborate soul-theory. It can only develop within certain fixed limits ; the fixed postulates of its basic god-theory set limits to its range of applicability while its reliance on the authority of divine intervention and revelation limits its powers of self-correction. Humanism, on the other hand, is acquiring a well-organised theoretical basis in the form of a comprehensive theory of evolution as a whole. It is an open system, capable of unlimited development ; its only postulate is a thoroughgoing naturalism, so that all phenomena are grist to its mill. Its reliance on scientific method makes it automatically self-correcting.

One should not be blind to the fact that all this rests upon the simple *ipse dixit* of the author. He seems to feel no need of furnishing proof. Indeed the only indication that the position could be challenged is the, perhaps inadvertent, admission that naturalism is, after all, a postulate. Is it not curious that the ' open system ' should be the one that excludes God and religion and the ' closed system ' the one that finds a place for them ? Is it the contemporary manifestation of a paradox noticed by Chesterton somewhere when he remarked that the least free of all thinkers was the man who followed the system of ' free thought ' ?

The remainder of Sir Julian Huxley's article is devoted to the attempt to show that ' the entire god-theory . . . and its picture of the world and man's destiny is in the process of being superseded by the evolutionary vision '. This is not the place to take up the various points Huxley makes in support of this conclusion. Detailed refutation would be a

long and a specialized task ; and, as often happens in theological debate, defence may be more difficult and less convincing than attack. That is particularly true when the attack is made in the name of science ; for in the modern world the protagonist of science enjoys the enormous advantage of being listened to while the theologian must make himself heard as best he can above the clamour of many ideologies. One must, however, remark upon the special pleading, to say no more, indulged in by Sir Julian Huxley in the article under review. God is for him a hypothesis now, after many centuries, finally discredited ; evolution, a hypothesis less than a century ago, he would now advance to the status of a fact. The ' soul-hypothesis ' is said to be ' increasingly failing to account for psychological and neurological facts ' (which facts it is not stated) ; it is contrasted with the ' atom-hypothesis ' which has given rise to atomic theory with ' high predictive value and practical applicability '. On the subject of creation—the specific issue between his grandfather and the Bishop of Oxford—Huxley is unscientific enough to criticize a position without verifying that it is the position taken up by theology. He finds himself, curiously enough, in agreement with St Thomas in holding that reason cannot show a beginning of the universe in time. But it is unlikely that Sir Julian consciously took sides in a scholastic controversy. It simply suits his argument to say that reason cannot prove that the world began in time and to proceed thereafter as if creation had been disposed of. An eternal world is, ultimately, no more self-explanatory than one that began in time. The scholastics—some of them at any rate—were well aware of this. Perhaps it is they who are undogmatic and the scientific humanists the ones who will not brook contradiction.[1] On the subject of conservation Huxley professes not to understand Dr Mascall's explanation that it is the extension of the creative act and he offensively terms it ' double-talk '. On the stages of man's evolution from primitive matter to rational life one bows to the authority of Huxley the biologist, while feeling that he expresses himself with a dogmatic assurance not acceptable to all his colleagues in that science. The theological aspects, however, where Huxley has no special competence, receive the same summary treatment ; the descent of all men from one couple is rejected together with the doctrine of the special creation of the human soul. The manipulation of an impressive technical vocabulary may look like proof ; but it must not be forgotten that matters like these are simply outside the province of science in the restricted sense modern humanism gives that term. Huxley's final *tour-de-force* is the assertion that gods are products of ' psychometabolism ' :

[1] Revelation, of course, settles the matter of fact ; the world began in time—' In the beginning God created . . . ' But that did not prevent theologians discussing the merits of various views in the light of pure reason.

> The simplest and most natural way of accounting for the bewildering phenomena of existence, such as earthquakes and winds, madness and dreams, and eventually for the fact of existence itself, was by ascribing them to the actions of personal but supernatural beings. Some of these crystallised into gods. Man's craving for unity eventually fused them all into one God ; and then pure reason and logic got to work untrammelled by scientific method and evolved the elaborate god-theories of theology.

Scientific humanism, however, has found a way out of this ' dark cul-de-sac of cultural evolution ' and Huxley concludes with an expression of his relief at shedding the burden of belief in God ' a burden to the human spirit, a cloud heavy with frightening incomprehensibility overshadowing the landscape of human destiny '.

* * * *

It may be thought unreasonable to expect Sir Julian Huxley to justify all his assertions within the compass of a short newspaper article. It is instructive, therefore, to compare what he says with an extended and authoritative—if that is the word—exposition of scientific humanism. Corliss Lamont's *The Philosophy of Humanism* (Third edition, London, 1958) originally grew out of a lecture course given at Columbia University and has, in the course of a decade, gone through several editions in America and in England. It is no exaggeration to say that from beginning to end the book contains scarcely a single serious argument. Humanism, briefly defined as ' a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and according to the methods of reason and democracy ' (p. 9), is reduced to ten central propositions. This humanist decalogue asserts that ' firstly Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics or attitude towards the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth . . . Secondly Humanism believes that man is an evolutionary product of this great Nature of which he is a part . . . that as an inseparable unity of body and soul he can have no conscious survival after death . . . Thirdly Humanism believes in reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method . . . ' The other principles deal with the grounding of morality and human values in ' this-earthly experiences and relationships ', with freewill, service to the community, art, world-order, civil liberties and tolerance.

The rejection of the supernatural is the basic principle of this programme. More than any other assertion it characterizes scientific humanism. Walter Lippmann, a well-known and influential humanist, writes of the supernatural kingdom of God as presented in Christian tradition :

> To those who believe that this kingdom exists, the modern spirit is nothing less than treason to God . . . To the modern spirit, on the other hand, the belief in this kingdom must necessarily seem a grandiose fiction projected by human needs and desires. The humanistic view is that the popular faith does not prove the existence of its objects but only the presence of a desire that such objects should exist . . .[1]

Now the purpose of humanism is, in Dr Lamont's words, ' to help to serve as an answer and antidote to some of the irrational tendencies of the present era ' (Preface). Right through his wide-ranging book religion is included among the irrational tendencies with no more justification than the author's constant reiteration that this is so. Religion is primitive, obsolete ; it involves the surrender of mind to authority ; revelation and mystical states are in no way different from epilepsy, hysteria, neurasthenia, frustration of ambition or sexual passion or the effects of hallucinogenic drugs or physical ordeals like prolonged fasting, flagellation or even dancing[2]. Kant's dictum that ' hasty appeal to the supernatural is a couch upon which the intellect slothfully reclines ' is cited as if it disposed finally of theology[3]. The rejection of the supernatural, on the contrary, is said to be ' emancipated ', ' mature ', ' scientific ', and even ' democratic ' ! One searches Dr Lamont's book in vain for the proofs of these judgments. Without proof such qualifications are no more than an emotive use of terms. The logician calls it the appeal to vanity or the *argumentum ad verecundiam* and has no great opinion of it even as a plausible fallacy.

Why, one is tempted to ask, do scientific humanists claim such authority for their dicta ? Why should Dr Lamont be believed at once when he says that faith in God is a relic of superstition, outmoded in this scientific twentieth century ? Those who tell us that God and the supernatural do exist at least take the trouble to show that that belief is reasonable. What the theologians call the ' preamble of faith ' is just this—the examination of Revelation's titles to credibility. When the titles are seen to be good, the assent of faith is reasonable. This is not to *prove* the truths of faith but to establish that it is not unreasonable to believe them. Scientific humanists do not afford their readers this courtesy. God, and the theologians of the Faith seem to have a greater respect for the human intellect.

Scientific humanism owes a great deal of its plausibility to the prestige enjoyed—and rightly—by experimental science. Physical science was, perhaps, freed from the tutelage of its parent philosophy too late for the good of either ; like an adolescent who has too long been treated as a child, it has grown resentful. Certainly many scientists

[1] *Preface to Morals* (London, 1929), p. 143.
[2] *Philosophy of Humanism*, pp. 110–111, 119–120, 146, 159, 180, 189, etc.
[3] Ibid., p. 24, note.

harbour dark suspicions about theology and seem to go about in constant fear of a new obscurantism. A proper understanding of science and of theology shows that they have nothing to fear. If it were no more than a matter of removing the causes of an understandable distrust the future of theology, even among scientific humanists, might seem relatively bright. But the difficulty has deeper roots—the prestige of science is utilized in causes unworthy of it. To begin a statement : ' Science has shown . . . ' is to go a long way towards winning the assent of one's hearers in this our age. Honesty demands that the scientific proof be forthcoming or at least available. But too often the hearers, lulled by the reference to science, do not ask for the proof. It is a situation in which it is easy to exploit a credulity in minds incapable of testing for themselves whether the assertion is genuinely scientific. It is hard to acquit scientific humanism of this manoeuvre. It should be chastening to recall that this playing upon the respect for science produces an assent that cannot differ greatly from a less sophisticated age's deference to the printed word—' It must be true : I saw it in the papers ' !

In the rejection of religion and the supernatural the science laid most heavily under contribution by humanists is, as one would expect, experimental psychology. God is merely ' wish-fulfilment ', a product, as Huxley put it, of ' psychometabolism '. Now if wish-fulfilment means the acceptance of conclusions not because they are proven but because they appeal, then the relief professed by Huxley, Lamont and other scientific humanists at being rid of belief in God may be very significant. Why should it be considered scientific to explain away God as a rationalization of human desires—without explaining the desires—and to accept, at their face-value, the denials of God made by writers who make no secret of their desire to be rid of Him ?

The radical criticism of scientific humanism, however, is not that it appeals to science, but that it identifies science with experimental science. Science, in general, has fairly been described as the search for causes. One way of knowing a phenomenon, an eclipse of the sun for example, is to experience it, in this case an unaccustomed darkness. Another way is to know what causes the phenomenon, namely a certain alignment of heavenly bodies. There is no doubt which is the better. Better be an astronomer than a star-gazer ; better be in a position to predict eclipses centuries in advance than spend time wondering whether God does not from time to time hang the heavens in black and shroud the face of the sun. But not all causes are conveniently material and quantifiable. It is a great advance to know what something complex, a living cell, for example, is made of. But there comes a stage when more ultimate causes must be sought, when questions arise that simply cannot be decided by study of the local disposition of particles and their movements. A limit is reached in one order of causality and a

science of a higher order takes up where physical science leaves off. When one has studied the various phenomena of the universe one may be led to raise questions about the nature of reality itself; that way lies metaphysics, the science of being, and metaphysics points to God. Something of all this is surely indicated in the way in which experimental science, which originally flew off at a tangent from philosophy, now finds itself progressing in a kind of parabola that is taking it back to philosophy.

* * * *

So far 'scientific'. Why 'humanism' however? Humanism which 'started its modern career with all the advantages of a name replete with noble traditions'[1] was a label well worth capturing. Nor was the feat too difficult. 'Humanism', said William James at the beginning of the century, 'suffers badly at present from incomplete definition . . . It is a word of many meanings, stretching from a praiseworthy interest in things human to a complete divinization of man'.[2] A glance at the *Oxford Dictionary* will amply confirm James's diagnosis. The *Encyclopaedia Britanica* notes that Renaissance humanism was a revolt against intellectual, and especially ecclesiastical, authority and adds confidently that it is 'the parent of all modern developments, whether intellectual, scientific or social'! Undoubtedly it has exercised a peculiar fascination for the modern mind—marxism and existentialism have both laid claims to be 'humanisms'.

A decisive moment in what Dean Inge has called this 'unjustifiable narrowing of a useful word'[3] came at the beginning of the present century when the Oxford philosopher F. C. S. Schiller annexed 'humanism' as the most expressive name for the form of pragmatism, 'defined in conscious opposition to absolutism', held by William James and himself. James was rather vague about humanism and seems to have been more concerned with adopting a position of polemical advantage than with defining the term:

> As I apprehend the movement towards humanism it is based on no particular discovery or principle that can be driven into one precise formula which thereupon can be impaled upon a logical skewer. It is much more like one of those secular changes that come upon public opinion overnight, as it were borne upon tides 'too full for sound or foam', that survive all the crudities and extravagances of their advocates, that you can pin to no one absolutely essential statement nor kill by one decisive jab . . . Scholasticism still opposes to such changes the method of confutation by single decisive reasons, showing that the new

[1] K. E. Kirk, *The Threshold of Ethics* (London, 1933), p. 95.
[2] *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 86, 191.
[3] W. R. Inge, *The Fall of the Idols* (London, 1940), p. 205.

> view involves self-contradiction, or traverses some fundamental principle. This is like stopping a river by planting a stick in the middle of its bed. Round your obstacle flows the water and gets there all the same.[1]

But if James was vague, Schiller was not. In particular he set his face against a theistic interpretation of humanism (James had professed to be open-minded on this question). Humanism is 'the philosophical attitude which regards the interpretation of human experience as the primary concern of all philosophizing and asserts the adequacy of human knowledge for this purpose'. Humanism puts man at the centre of the intellectual universe 'thus joining with the literary humanism of the Renaissance which was essentially an attempt to emancipate thought and education from what it considered the narrow scholastic routine of the medieval church by appealing to the civilizing mission of the humaner letters.'[1] Schiller sees a similar pattern in the Greece of the fifth century B.C., the era of the Sophists' revolt 'against the domination of pedantic, abstruse and sterile speculation' and points out that modern humanism is 'so largely and avowedly a conscious revival of the critical relativism of Protagoras and appeals so explicitly to his maxim that "man is the measure of all things" that it may, without injustice, be called Neo-Protagoreanism'. The movement of the Sophists was, of course, as Werner Jaeger points out[2] not the climax of Greek thought but a declension. The humanist tradition of Western civilization is undoubtedly Greek in its origins; but it can be summarized not in Protagoras's maxim but in Plato's observation in the *Laws* (IV, 716C) that 'God is the measure of all things'.

Schiller's philosophical system is now only of academic interest. His main importance rests on the fact that his take-over bid for humanism was successful and that from him the word passed effectively into modern scientific humanism. Rationalism at the end of the nineteenth century could be defined as 'the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority'. Nowadays, the Handbook of the Rationalist Press Association points out, 'many people who share this point of view prefer to call themselves "humanists."'

* * * *

The question still remains: Why did humanism lend its name so readily to the modern blend of secularism, materialism and atheism? The attempt to answer that question involves an historical excursus.

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[1] *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 245–6; cf. pp. 193 ff.
[2] Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. 'Humanism'.
[3] *Humanism and Theology* (Milwaukee, 1943), pp. 36–7.

There is no doubt that the Renaissance harking back to the classics of ancient Greece and Rome looms large in the background of contemporary scientific humanism. Various factors, not the least of which was the flow of Greek manuscripts to the West after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, conspired to make the writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries look back at antiquity across the intervening ' centuries of barbarism ' ; was it not these writers who coined the term ' Middle Ages ' ? There were at the Renaissance, as there are in every age, spirits who chafed under authority—and authority then was above all represented by the Church. Such spirits could find the study of the writings of pagan antiquity, which antedated Christianity, congenial quite apart from their intrinsic literary qualities. Such a study could be turned, not altogether fairly, against the Church and its authority. The word ' humanism ' does not yet appear ; the Renaissance scholars spoke of *humanitas*, the word they found in Cicero to express admiration for the Greek ideal. The re-discovery of this ideal was said to be the re-awakening of Europe. Do moderns tend to exaggerate the contrast between the Renaissance and the allegedly dormant Europe that preceded it ? Works like Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance*, often reprinted since 1860 and lavishly illustrated, give every encouragement to do so. Burckhardt might have been writing a commentary on Erasmus's famous exclamation to Budé : ' Immortal God ! What a world I see dawning ! Why am I not young again ? '[1]

In this matter of Renaissance humanism two observations may be made. The first is the obvious one that the Middle Ages were not an unrelieved darkness of the spirit ; nor was scholasticism, their characteristic achievement, a sterile waste of logic-chopping where no warmth of humanity penetrated and no flower of literature or poetry bloomed. There were, admittedly, ' flowering times and barren times, catabolic and anabolic periods'.[2] There was the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century, with Johannes Scotus Eriugena as one of its great figures ; and a parallel period of humanism and theology in the East, the period of Photius and Arethas. There was the brilliant and precocious culture of the Norman Sicily of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, a culture savoured by the young Aquinas when he studied at Naples ? There was Chartres which stood as a centre of humanistic study. Or—to shorten the argument—one has only to consult such books as Helen Waddell's *Wandering Scholars* or Stephen Gaselee's *Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* to see something of the achievement of medieval humanists.

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[1] C. S. Lewis in his autobiographical *Surprised by Joy* (ch. 5) remarks that the more he looks at the evidence the less is he able to see the Renaissance as Europe's joyous reawakening.

[2] W. R. Inge, *The Fall of the Idols*, p. 208.

The second observation goes more to the root of the problem of the anti-religious turn taken by much of the humanism of the Renaissance. It is this : that there must always be what, for want of a better word, one may call a tension between the pursuit of secular learning and the claims of supernatural religion. It is already present at the beginnings of Christianity. St, Paul when he preached at Athens seems at first to have been willing to use pagan culture as an instrument of persuasion ; but when he found that there was no real openmindedness in his cultivated hearers on the Areopagus he speedily abandoned the approach. (*Acts of the Apostles*, XVII, 18–33.) The early Church shared his suspicion of the culture of the pagan world in which it had to make its way. Tatian the Assyrian was not alone in his feeling that Christianity should remain a 'strong and barbarous faith'.[1] Yet Christianity could not remain unaffected by pagan culture. If the Gospel was preached in the direct and uncomplicated utterance of simple men to simple men—'to the poor the Gospel is preached'—the truths of the Faith had soon to be given a precise formulation, in a terminology largely shaped by the ancient culture. *Non in dialectica*, said the medieval writer, *placuit Deus salvum facere populum suum.* Yet even to discuss meaningfully the truths of Faith one must have regard to the laws of a logic developed without reference to Revelation. The tension was no nearer resolution in the fifteenth century when the author of the *Imitation of Christ* could begin a chapter (I, 2) 'All men naturally desire to know'—which is Aristotle—and ask immediately : 'But what doth knowledge avail without the fear of God ?'

To say, however, that humanism and religion do not easily lie together is very far from admitting an irrevocable opposition between them. Some of the greatest figures in the humanism of the Renaissance found their learning compatible with their Faith. Erasmus, who more than any other was identified with the new humanism, could reconcile his scholarship with submission to the Church ; and the humanist St Thomas More exchanged the Lord Chancellorship of England for the gallows rather than deny his Faith. And when humanists in those days spoke slightingly of scholasticism, of its pointless subtleties and endless nominalistic logomachies, it must be recalled that the scholasticism of their immediate experience had declined sadly from that of the thirteenth century. One can sympathize with Erasmus and his contemporaries who wished to save theology from some of the exponents of a base scholasticism ; but the humanists' insistence upon the *philosophia*

[1] *Contra Graecos*, cc. 29, 35 cited by W. Jaeger, *Humanism and Theology*, p. 12. Although Tatian put the *dogmata barbarorum* above Greek and Roman *paideia* his elaborate prose-style is 'not in agreement with his antipathy to Greek culture. His language shows the strong influence of Greek rhetoric in every line and proves that his practice was not as uncompromising as his theory.'

Christi, upon the *sapiens et eloquens pietas* and the rest was no more a rejection of all theology than, say, the foundation of a *Collegium Trilingue* (by Erasmus and Busleiden) at Louvain, for the study of the Biblical languages Latin, Greek and Hebrew, was a rejection of all previous Bible study. Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries humanism was not necessarily anti-religious or anti-Catholic ; still less was it atheistic.

* * * *

Perhaps now it will be conceded that the real problem in determining the meaning of humanism is that of deciding its relationship to God. Let us take humanism in the widest possible sense, the sense of Terence's *nil humanum alienum*, paraphrased by Walter Pater in the proposition that ' nothing that had ever interested the human mind could wholly lose its vitality ', and ask the pertinent question : Is man's relationship to God not something human ? Why should ' human ' necessarily mean the merely human ?

There are, it appears, three broad categories of humanists ; there are those who, like Huxley and Lamont, dogmatically exclude God ; there are those who are agnostic like William James ;[1] and there are those—the immense majority when the conspectus of history is taken—who are theists. The break in the fifteenth century came not with the substitution of atheistic for theistic humanism but with the effort to make theistic humanism anthropocentric. The older Christian humanists were theocentric in their approach to learning—men as various as Gerbert of Aurillac (later to become the philosopher-pope Sylvester II), Fulbert of Chartres, John of Salisbury, Abelard, Dante and many others. And their theocentric conception of humanism is not merely Christian but also Greek. St Augustine was speaking with historical accuracy when, in the City of God (VIII, 2) he called Plato the ' father of theology '—the word ' theology ' is first found in Plato's *Republic* (II, 379A). The achievement of Plato and Aristotle was to re-establish the certainty of God as the supreme principle of the natural and social world. Theology was from the first, as Werner Jaeger points out[2], ' intended to transcend humanism, but at the same time it was the true fulfilment of the task which humanism had formulated '.

Here is the *humanisme intégral* for which Jacques Maritain, in our time, has campaigned in season and out of season. One may agree or not with the details of his conception of integral humanism (as one may agree or not with his conception of the Christian philosophy) ; but he is surely right in his contention that any humanism worthy of the

[1] Cf. George Sarton, *History of Science and the New Humanism* (Harvard, 1937), pp. xiv-xv, 158 : Viscount Haldane, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (London, 1922), pp. 88–90.

[2] *Humanism and Theology*, pp. 55–6 ; cf. pp. 42–6.

name must take account of man's existential condition as a being raised to the supernatural order, fallen and redeemed ; otherwise one omits the most significant dimension in human existence. To forswear in advance what is above nature is to condemn oneself to an inadequate humanism.[1] And lest one should think that this is merely a professional Catholic viewpoint one might reflect upon A. J. Balfour's conclusion to his Gifford Lectures : ' My desire has been to show that all we think best in human culture, whether associated with beauty, goodness or knowledge, requires God for its support, that Humanism without Theism loses more than half its value.'[2]

* * * *

The patient reader has been led a long way from Huxley's article on ' Science and God ' ; but not too long a way if he will now agree that to suggest that scientific humanism is neither scientific nor humanist is no facile paradox but sober truth. He may also notice that scientific humanism is remarkable more for what it rejects than for what it asserts—which should be disquieting for humanists who reflect upon Leibniz's dictum that ' every philosophy is true in what it affirms and false in what it denies '.

The really important conclusion, however, is that a good word like ' humanism ' must be defended. Unless Christians bestir themselves to show that the Christian view of man and the world are included in the true concept of humanism they may discover, too late, that the word has become yet another shibboleth of the forces of materialism and atheism.

[1] Cf. G. G. Walsh, *Medieval Humanism* (New York, 1942), p. 2—'What Christian humanism adds to pagan humanism is the idea that the several ways of seeking human happiness will be best reconciled when one ekes out reason with Revelation in the search for truth, conscience with Divine Counsels in the search for righteousness, taste with supernatural grace in the search for beauty. More briefly, Christian humanism supplements pagan humanism by the ideas of Creation, Incarnation, Sanctification '.

[2] *Theism and Humanism* (Gifford Lectures, 1914), p. 248.

Seán Lester

HIGH COMMISSIONER IN DANZIG, 1933-1937

by FELICIAN PRILL

Born Co. Antrim 1888 ; Started his career as a journalist ; associated with the Sinn Féin movement from an early date and was a constant contributor to Republican papers

1923 : Left his post as News Editor of the *Freeman's Journal* to enter the Department of External Affairs
1929 : Appointed Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations
1934 : Seconded to the League of Nations to take up the post of High Commissioner in Danzig
1937 : Appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations
Sept. 1940–47—Secretary-General of the League of Nations
1959 : died 13 June

IT is with deep sorrow that all friends of freedom and justice and of true democracy will have learned of the death last year of this noble Irishman. As one who was in a position to observe Seán Lester's career as High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig twenty-five years ago, I am glad to be able to make a contribution to the study of the political history of a time that was becoming increasingly tense through the growth, on the one hand, of the National Socialist movement and, on the other, by a policy of ' appeasement ' followed by the opponents abroad of that political doctrine.[1]

Some months ago Professor Carl Burckhardt, the last High Commissioner of the League in Danzig (who had to leave the Free City when war broke out on 1 September 1939), published his Memoirs of his mission there.[2] In this work he pays a great tribute to the work of his predecessor and his remarks about the difficulties Seán Lester had to meet during his term of office and the undaunted firmness with which he dealt with them are most impressive.

The establishment of the Free City of Danzig was a product of compromise in the peace treaty negotiations of 1919. Whereas the new-born Republic of Poland claimed the territory for herself without any reference to the fact that the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants were of German blood, the German delegation maintained that a

[1] The following remarks are based on information contained in the works listed, on my own observations as a member of the Civil Service of the Free City of Danzig, and on personal information supplied by former members of the Danzig Volkstag (Parliament), particularly by Herr Erich Brost and Rt Rev. Mgr Dr Stachnik.

[2] *Meine Danziger Mission* (Georg David Callwey, Munich, 1960)

solution such as that proposed would be in contradiction to the solemnly declared principles of self-determination. Nevertheless, the City of Danzig and a district around it with a population of about 400,000 people was detached from the German Reich and became a Free City against the wishes of its citizens. Thus, one of the most complicated creations in international life emerged from the dispute. It was a state in miniature : though possessing sovereignty it was still required to make more or less important economic concessions in favour of Poland. There were many voices raised on both sides to point out that the creation of the 'Polish Corridor' and of the Free City would prove to be a stumbling-block on the way to a peaceful settlement of German-Polish problems. Those voices spoke truly. It was Marcel Sembat who declared in the French Parliament that in Danzig lay the seeds of a new war.[1] The international status of the Free City, based on the Treaty of Versailles (Arts. 100–108) and on the Danzig-Polish Convention of 9 November 1920, became still more complicated by the stipulation that the status and Constitution of the city were to be guaranteed by the League of Nations. In consequence a High Commissioner was sent to Danzig as a permanent representative of the League. His task was twofold :

(a) He had to serve as an arbitrator in Danzig-Polish issues and each party to a dispute could appeal to the Council of the League in Geneva against his decisions and recommendations.

(b) Through him the League had to watch over the maintenance of the Danzig Constitution, amendments to which required the consent of the League's Council. (Art. 103, Peace Treaty of Versailles).

But no provision was made for the position which would arise when neither Danzig nor Poland was prepared to recognize a decision of the High Commissioner or of the League's Council.[2] The task of the High Commissioner was a very delicate and difficult one indeed. From the time of the coming into operation of the Peace Treaty until the date of the assumption of power by the Nazis in Germany—and a few months later in Danzig—the long series of controversies between the two partners never ceased. They were controversies which sometimes produced far-reaching consequences and seemed to be a permanent source of political tensions. We often had the feeling in Danzig that the state of affairs there was a sort of barometer for the world situation ; and subsequent events indicate that this view may not have been exaggerated.

[1] Burckhardt, ibid., 24.
[2] Burckhardt, ibid., 25.

The High Commissioners and the League did their utmost to solve all problems in a spirit of peace and justice. It was mainly due to the political wisdom of Count Gravina,[1] an Italian nobleman and grandson of Cosima Wagner, that the tensions in the last pre-Nazi years never achieved such proportions that world peace could have been endangered. Gravina, a man with great responsibility and a deep sense of duty,[2] died during his term of office and was buried in Danzig. I still remember the funeral of this popular diplomat, at which the late Lord Bishop of Danzig, Count Edward O'Rourke, a prelate of Irish descent, officiated.

As Burckhardt points out, the High Commissioner in the Free City lived like a state prisoner from the time that Hitler had come to power in Germany.[3] This was the situation Seán Lester had to face when he was appointed to his post in October, 1933.

The Nazi Government in Danzig had taken over a few months before. According to instructions from the headquarters of the Party, the National Socialists acted cautiously in the beginning and gave little grounds for complaint. But this changed very soon and the Nazis began to employ in Danzig the same methods they had used in the Reich itself ; their chief aim was to ban all democratic activity of political parties and individuals. None of Seán Lester's predecessors ever had to deal with difficulties in the field of the internal policy of the Free City. Almost all the High Commissioner's energies heretofore were absorbed by the arbitration of Danzig-Polish issues. While this part of Seán Lester's task was of less importance than in previous years because of the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact of 20 January 1934, the role of the League and of its representative as protectors of Danzig's democratic constitution became increasingly important. From the beginning of his term of office Seán Lester left no doubt that he was determined to object to every contempt and violation of the Constitution. It is said that on an appropriate occasion he spoke the following words which became very popular in the Free City and which were characteristic of him : ' I wish that all people may be happy here '.

Thus, by all means he supported the politicians and organizations who fought for the integrity of the democratic constitution in particular and for human rights in general. He had to deal with a long series of complaints relating to unjustified arrests, deportations, oppressions of the press and of political, economic and religious organizations and movements. Carefully and conscientiously he prepared for the Council of the League the Petitions of Rights which were lodged with him against the violation of the Constitution and, with zeal and tremendous

[1] High Commissioner in Danzig, 1929–1932.

[2] Ernst Ziehm, *Aus meiner politischen Arbeit in Danzig* (Herder-Institut, Marburg/Lahn, 1956), p. 105. Dr Ziehm was the last president of the Government of the Free City who was not a National Socialist. He was born 1 May 1867, and now lives in Detmold.

[3] Burckhardt, ibid., 29.

toughness, he pleaded democracy's cause. Every friend of freedom and justice was convinced that he had dedicated himself fully to the ideals of humanity and that he was guided by the Roman proverb, *principiis obsta.*

The circumstances in Danzig and especially the methods used by the Nazis were quite new to him when he took over his post. Unlike his predecessors he was unable to speak German or Polish. In Burckhardt's opinion[1] this was not a great disadvantage in his work ; in my opinion, at least, it was not a handicap for him. I have been informed by those competent to judge that he soon became familiar with the local problems. He possessed a practical political intellect which enabled him to deal with policy as the art of doing the possible—in Bismarck's sense. He never was satisfied with the broad outline of a case but always and immediately sought the details.

It was a tremendous work that Seán Lester achieved, but his endeavours were in vain. He was sufficiently courageous to take political measures which were not popular in certain circles in the League and this was the real reason for the failure of his mission : he was not supported sufficiently strongly by the Council of the League and he eventually found himself isolated.[2] His predecessor, Helmer Rosting,[3] who had foreseen the difficulties which would probably emerge from National Socialist intentions and the reaction of the opposition parties, resigned shortly after the Nazi Party had assumed control of the Free City. Apparently, he was certain that legitimate co-operation with the Nazi Senate would not be possible.[4]

The attitude of the League's Council with regard to the Petitions of Rights was a somewhat peculiar one from the first day of the Opposition's campaign. During the first months some hope was left that the principles of law and justice would prevail but this view receded more and more into the background later on. The destiny of democratic life in the Free City was at the mercy of high policy and became increasingly dependent on the bilateral relations of the powers concerned. Mainly as a result of Polish political tactics Lester's position eventually became hopeless.

In March, 1933, when Dr Ziehm was still in power, Poland suffered a noticeable defeat before the Council of the League in a case of vital importance for Danzig. She had manoeuvred herself into a situation which permitted no dignified solution. She was forced to withdraw troops equipped with heavy weapons which she had landed some time before at her ammunition depot at the Westerplatte near Danzig ;

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[1] Burckhardt, ibid., 31.
[2] Ziehm, ibid., 114.
[3] Helmer Rosting, Danish Diplomat, High Commissioner, 1932–1933.
[4] Ziehm, ibid., 113.

this was in contradiction to the treaty provision that the Free City should never serve as a base for armed forces. According to François Poncet this defeat was the deciding factor for Pilsudski's resolve to conclude a non-aggression pact with Hitler.[1] Based on this treaty adverted to above, Poland changed entirely her attitude, not only to the internal policy of the Free City, but to the League of Nations itself. The High Commissioner, striving for the maintenance of an internal situation in accordance with the principles of the City's Constitution, lost Polish support for the Petitions of Rights, and the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Józef Beck, availed himself of several opportunities to blame the League for its policy in Danzig. Poland did nothing to ease the internal tension caused by the anti-constitutional attitude of the Nazis. The Polish Foreign Office was apparently of the opinion that the National Socialist rule in Danzig would develop in favour of Poland. Neither Poland, nor Britain, as a member of the Council, after the Anglo-German Agreement about the limitation of naval strength, was inclined at that time to jeopardize its relations with Hitler.[2] For instance, in a case dealing with a definite violation of the Danzig Constitution, the Polish judge in the International Court in The Hague even voted—together with the judges of Japan and Italy—in favour of the Nazis.

The session of the Council of January 1936 was crucial for the whole Danzig issue. The attitude of the majority of the Council's members seemed to be a test for the general political line of the respective powers. After some critical remarks by the Polish Foreign Minister about Seán Lester's activity—which was absolutely correct—the Council passed a resolution which was tantamount to the abandonment of the guarantee of the Danzig Constitution.[3]

Nevertheless, the High Commissioner persevered in his endeavours to maintain proper co-operation with the State authorities, but the furious attacks on him launched by the Nazis never stopped. The Nazi press especially and the public Party rallies, where Hitler's satrap in the Free City served as the main agitator[4], were the main stages for the insults of hooligans and criminals.

An incident on the occasion of a German naval visit late in June 1936 brought this disastrous development to a close. In accordance with protocol the High Commissioner had sent out invitations to a

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[1] Ziehm, ibid., 177. François Poncet was French Ambassador to Germany for a long time before and also after World War II.

[2] Burckhardt, ibid., 42.

[3] Burckhardt, ibid., 43. In the opinion of official Poland Lester was ' an inefficient doctrinaire without personal contacts '. Burckhardt, ibid., 50.

[4] Albert Forster, in Danzig since 1930. He was sentenced to death by the Poles after the war.

reception in honour of the captain and officers of the visiting German cruiser. Shortly before the beginning of the function Herr Greiser, the head of the National Socialist Government[1], refused to attend, all his Government officials and the German naval officers refused likewise, under the pretext that the Fuhrer, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, did not allow an invitation from the representative of the League to be accepted. At the next session of the Council, a few days later, Herr Greiser launched heavy attacks against the High Commissioner and pressed for his recall ; he concluded his speech with the phrase, ' Heil Hitler '. Turning to the laughing journalists he showed his tongue. Thus, the behaviour of the Nazis had descended to the lowest level. I still remember these facts and the angry comments of the Polish press and broadcasting stations. Public opinion in Poland was excited, but, in spite of that, Józef Beck repeated his attacks on the League concerning its former policy about Danzig, pointing out that Poland would not be inclined to risk her safety in defence of the High Commissioner's position and his intrusions into internal politics in Danzig. A British request for support for the representative of the League was rejected by the Polish Government, which replied that the League for about 16 years had caused difficulties for Polish policy in the Free City. Only after a formal request on behalf of the Council was Poland prepared to settle the issue of the naval visit by diplomatic means.[2]

By practically giving up the guarantee of the democratic way of life in Danzig the Council of the League undermined not only the position of its representative there, but also lost much of its own reputation. This disclosed the inefficiency of an institution whose original purpose was to secure self-determination and human rights at all costs. The majority of the Council lost one of the last ideological strongholds of freedom and democracy by thus sacrificing a territory with a pre-preponderantly German population. The attitude of the Council, moreover, prepared the way for the final destiny of the League and its members, especially of Poland. The policy of that country, after Pilsudski's death (12 May 1935), did not seem to be very far-sighted. Its friendly attitude towards the Nazis granted it only a respite, as everybody of our generation knows. It was only months before the outbreak of war that the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, Field-Marshal Rydz-Smigly, declared in a speech that Poland was prepared to defend ' not only her jacket, but every button of it '. In reality she had herself cut off one or more of these buttons when she had resolved to act as indicated above.

[1] Arthur Greiser was President of the Danzig Senate from 1934 to 1939. He was hanged by the Poles after the war.

[2] Burckhardt, ibid., 44.

Seán Lester was truly convinced that the Free City was of major importance in the struggle between democracy and totalitarianism. In his opinion the League by efficient measures could have shown that by no means all Germans were followers of Hitler. Thus, he deemed it necessary not to accede to the ambitions of the Nazis in the sphere of external politics. He opposed, therefore, any kind of appeasement. He was quite aware of what would happen in the future and realized completely the main objects of National Socialist policy. He knew that this policy would lead to war.

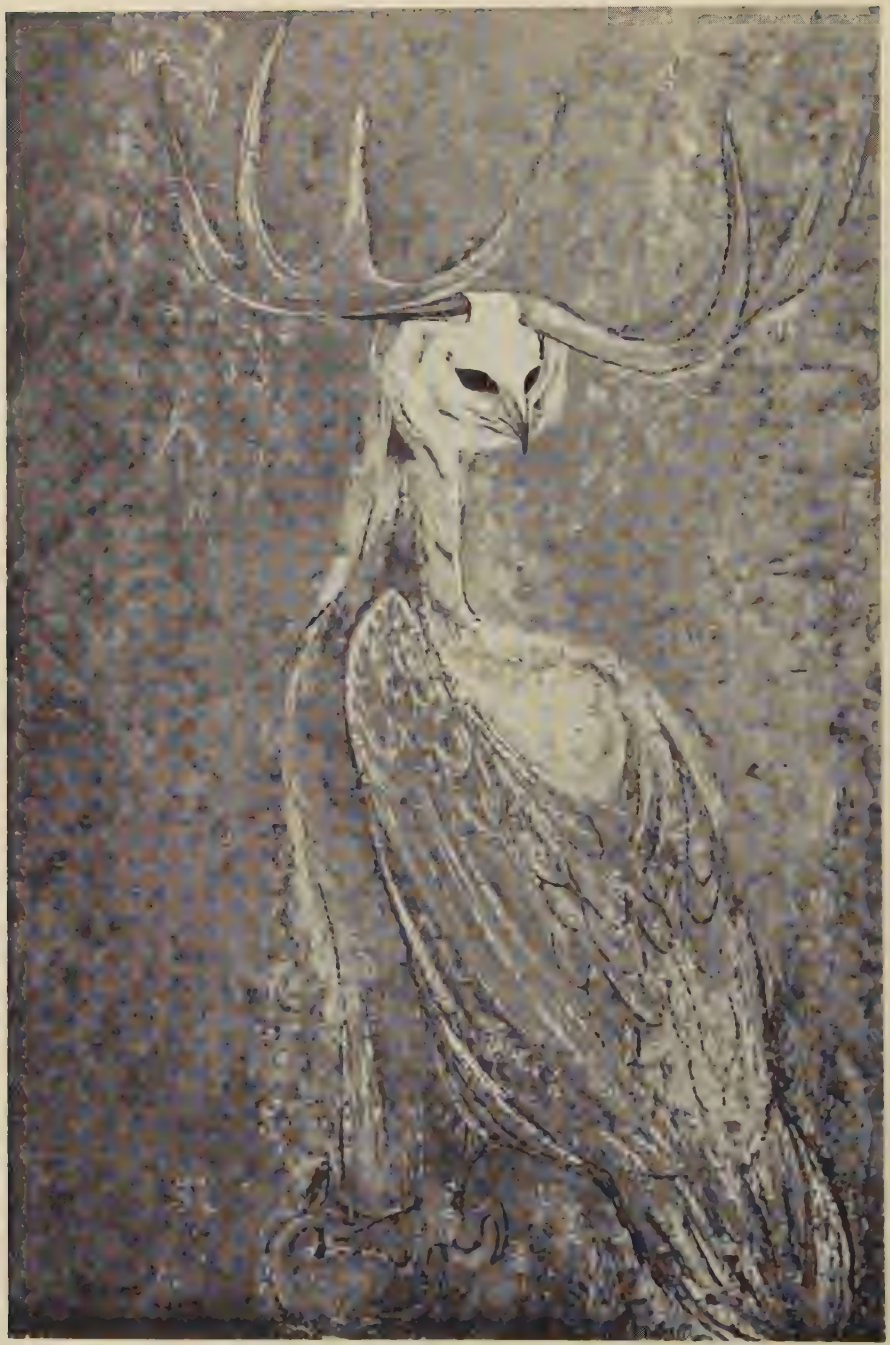
Before his term expired Seán Lester resigned his post. No possibility for contacts with the opposition parties was henceforth left to him, because the Nazi Government prosecuted all those members of the democratic parties who tried to come into personal touch with him in political matters. When he left the Free City early in 1937, the democratic constitution was seriously undermined and the legal system of a constitutional state had practically ceased to exist. But every citizen of Danzig, with the exception of the fanatical Nazis, paid tribute to the spirit of resistance in which he fought always for the true interests of the German population in the Free City. One felt that, in his noble mind, he had always acted in accordance with the principles of the City's motto : *Nec temere, nec timide*. No one who defended freedom and justice in the dark days of Germany's history will ever forget the resolute spirit of this brave Irishman, Seán Lester.

Painting in America: an Impression

by PATRICK PYE

MY acquaintance with America was limited to ten days in New York and two months in Los Angeles. New York is stimulating and exciting and the galleries are as comprehensive as those of Paris or London, only usually better arranged. But no place in America is ill-provided with art and Los Angeles boasts more than thirty dealers' galleries as well as the usual museum possessing Picassos, Lautrecs and most of the modern masters. Los Angeles is hardly a typical American city, but it manages to combine many of those national features most foreign to the European. It seems like a city of the 21st Century. Built where the desert meets the sea by money-happy explorers at the turn of the century, it now has about five million inhabitants and stretches nearly a hundred miles along the coast and thirty miles inland. The city centre is relatively small so that most of the area is made up of small towns that have got engulfed in the suburban growth from Downtown. The architecture is impersonal. Outside the city centre of office blocks comes a mixture of Spanish villas, French Manard, Georgian, Gothic and Tudor together with garages and unashamedly modern coffee bars that have a tendency to sprout wings and take off from various angles into outer space. Our Georgian style was reserved for the more prosperous suburbs. The landscape is like a stage set and has the same feeling of impermanence and unreality. It is a landscape dominated by the motor car. I was told that in a census taken recently it was found that there was *almost* one car per head of population. There have to be gasoline stations to feed these monsters and great holes in the cityscape, deserts, in which to park them. It is odd that in this strange scene the only element that seems justified and permanent is the highway. These highways often have ten lanes of traffic. As the cars rush by, their drivers gaze fixed to the groove of the road and engines silenced, their tires make a swishing sound on the surface not unlike the perpetual motion of the waves.

Most Americans are very art-conscious, but Californians in particular, though they may make a wasteland of their urban landscape, decorate the walls of their homes with original paintings. But these paintings are not picturesque scenes reminiscent of the annual holiday as they probably would be here. They are ' modern ' paintings, pictures which



Guardian by Morris Graves
[oil, 1952: in collection of University of Illinois]

Young Gander by Morris Graves

[oil, 1952: in collection of Mr Joseph Hirshharn]

would be popularly described here with the phrase 'as the artist sees it' ! One thing is noticeable and highly laudable. People do not wait to know the possible fame of the artist ; they have the money and they buy where and what they like without snobbery.

Many Europeans look to the States as the home of all that is vital and avant-garde in art. Indeed the very occasion for academic naturalistic painting in a background like Los Angeles is psychologically and morally inconceivable. It is not just that the scenery in America is different from here. Surely it would be odd if such a condition of life as exists in America (which, may I add, is so different from those conditions that produced the naturalism now accepted in the academies) failed to breed a special sensibility to deal with the problems of this condition. In Los Angeles, as to a lesser degree in the whole western world, there are different relations between man and the world, men and things, the visible and the invisible, that have made academic naturalism an anachromism. But the problem of Why Abstract Art ? is too vast to enter on here. For the purposes of this short article I shall have to accept that it *is* here and maybe at the end I shall venture a few personal opinions on its relation to the American scene.

The background to the modern movement in painting in America does not bear as coherent a line of development as it does in Europe. The painting done during the settling of America and until after the civil war followed more or less from the tradition of the Dutch and English schools. By the turn of the century a semi-impressionistic naturalism alongside with social realism had come to the front. Eakins and Sloane were perhaps the leaders of this school. Personally, I find their naturalism journalistic and prosaic, and their social comment crude. But there is a romantic painter of this period who deserves to be better known in Europe. This is Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917).

Ryder is best known for his marinescapes in which a lonely boat makes its way across a moonlit horizon. He painted mythological scenes and landscapes as well, but it is in the unerring imaginative intelligence and the great simplicity with which he gives us the sea, as it lives in the mind, an image of infinity, and the boat as it represents man's precarious voyage there, that his work rises to its greatest. He passed the test that faces every artist who is also a visionary : he set himself apart from the rest of the world in dedication to the life of the imagination and he realized the elementary symbols that obsessed him as living truth. The form in Ryder's paintings is dictated by a halucinatory moonlight that like a drapery clings to and then leaves untouched the body it covers. In following the light over the body of the earth Ryder discovers the most potent and hypnotic rhythms to which he sacrifices all other naturalistic and literary interests. The colour is the simplest—

yellowish moonlight and bluish or inky sea (though it is rich), but the form in light and dark is intensely realized. His painting with its strong abstract bias and its concern for the inner life instead of the world of appearance anticipated the art of our own time.

Ryder lived a simple and frugal life and there are many charming stories that illustrate his simplicity and eccentricity. But though it is improbable that he was conscious that his work would anticipate the next generation, much less that the new art would make so radical a break with the past, he was as fully selfconscious as every artist has found it necessary to be, in relation to the task immediately in front of him. This is how he describes the way he worked : ' Have you ever seen an inch worm crawl up a leaf or a twig, and them clinging to the very end, revolve in the air, feeling for something to reach something? That's like me. I am trying to find something out there beyond the place on which I have a footing.'

One can understand that an artist like Ryder would be isolated against the pragmatic American scene. But though realism provided the main current at this time it suffered some modifications at the turn of the century. Just at the time when national revivals were making many European countries conscious of their folk traditions Grant Wood painted his masterpiece of the national scene ' American Gothic.' This painting which depicts an elderly farmer and his wife standing face on in front of their home sums up the essence of the stern puritanical spirit that endured and dominated the rural lands of New England. The painting bears comparison with the art of Dirk Bouts. There is an absolute truth of characterization in both artists. The meanness and the dignity of this man and his wife have both been acknowledged.

Grant was an uneven painter, so much so that one may sometimes doubt the artist's selfknowledge. Marsden Hartley was also uneven, but his mistakes were more consistent ones. A man of profound seriousness, he had a love of nature and a sense of design, of picture-making if not of form. Details in his work do not always hold up to scrutiny, the wing of a bird is clumsily articulated, a colour or texture is dead, but he had an original directness in his way of stating a composition. When this is combined with a simple and passionate response to nature as in ' Evening Storm, Schoodic ' he can bring off a fine and exciting painting.

Of the realists, Edward Hopper is perhaps the one who most exemplifies the particular conditions of the American scene. His subject matter is the American scene *in toto*. Hopper's vision tends to be encyclopedic and does not stop short before petrol pumps, cinema interiors and other indigestable contemporary matter. He is quite right too : they are all part of our experience and should be possible

matter for art. There is great honesty as well as courage in Hopper's work. He tries to give us all the facts in a world that he wants us to admit is our own : the world of vacant lots (which Shahn found necessary to poetize), cheap cafés and hoardings. His purpose is a good one and the mood is there, the mood of city loneliness, the vast sense of America, the isolation of the individual. A painting called ' Office at Night ' declares the artist's right to choose any scene from the wide range of experience. Two young people have stayed on late in an office but the room is unlived in at night and the two people are like intruders momentarily held prisoner. Hopper, however, has not treated this as literary subject matter as an English painter would do. It is presented as fact. The poetics of the scene therefore touch one all the more persuasively. Again and again Hopper brings to life with extraordinary force (in spite of clumsiness and lack of any painterly sense) the typical and commonplace of urban America, but nature he does not understand. Here the crudeness of his sensibility is unrelieved. His trees follow the simplified clichés of a thousand poster artists, his seas are like iron sheeting.

Hopper with his purpose of showing the world that we have to put up with is unyielding, architectural, and humourless. Even his paint is flat and devoid of sensuousness. There is nothing quite alive either in his paint or his world. So there is no joy. His colour is wooden. He commands our respect only by a heavy, ungainly honesty.

Hopper is still alive and working, but his work has had little influence on the prevalent styles of the last 25 years. There have been a number of social realists (Shahn, Levigne and Evergood), but most of the painting has taken its cue from non-figurative Parisian artists—until the advent of Jackson Pollock. Of the painters of this transitional period I unfortunately saw very little. I did not see any of Abraham Rattner who is reputed to be a fine expressionist and painter of religious subjects.

Jackson Pollock is now generally regarded as the founder of what is called ' the New York School '. Here we know it better as Tachism, Action Painting or simply the New Painting. Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the aims of an Edward Hopper than the aims of this new school. Where Hopper's aims were personal, limited to the very particular scene, the new style is cosmopolitan. Where Hopper was self-effacing, Pollock was proud and egotistical. Where the surface quality is ascetic in Hopper, indeed a miserably poor invitation to an averagely sensuous onlooker, now the spectator is presented with nothing but surface : delicious paint, nervous paint, ecstatic paint, paint laid, dripped, dragged or flung—but always paint !

Of this painting I am ill-equipped to speak. My taste extends to more disciplined architectural painting and to the concept of the

artist as one who paraphrases experience through imagery as well as his given material. My position is partisan, I cannot help it. While I will do my best to be reasonably impartial, the reader should be warned of my blind spots.

If I understand correctly, the precedent for this sort of painting is largely evident in the nature of the times. For 400 years the representation of nature dominated the plastic arts. Often during this time the image was debased by sentimentality much in the same way as the paint was debased by being made to simulate old varnish, beautiful leather or stuffs. At the beginning of the century there was a violent struggle in all the arts for the regaining of their proper characters and functions. The complex story of this battle for truth (no less) is too long to be given here : need it be said, however, that the new generation demanded that paint should look like paint. Each of the movements of modern painting has had a different concern beyond paint alone, but all (except surrealism) have held it essential that, whatever the painters ultimate concern, he must respect the nature of the ' coloured mud ' he made use of. Now, though naturalistic representation as a conscious aim of the artist was a product of the Renaissance, artists of all ages have been image makers. The uniqueness of the new Rebel position becomes apparent : the image has been debased by this naturalism, there is no more purpose for it. Images, they said, are dead currency. The new painting is not meant to have ' meaning '.

So the content of painting has gone underground. The surrealists are thought to have been too facile in their revelation of the subconscious life. We can too easily see through those queer feelings whose life depends solely on this odd juxtapositions of incongruous objects that the artist has been able to arrange. Now the subconscious is thought to find its proper expression in the automatism of the spontaneous gesture, the creative act. If we wish we can read these paintings much as a letter reader will interpret handwriting. What word the letters form is unimportant : but in the accidents of the handwriting we enjoy the signs of a nature in embryo making its way to selfconsciousness. Looking at paintings is a specialized job !

In the popular magazines that take it upon themselves to introduce the new art to the general public the talk is all about the spasm of the ' creative act '. We have only to turn to the art journals to see this turned into a complex metaphysic by some poet-critic. Of Joan Mitchell we are told ' She finds self-conscious painting boring. Nor does she indulge in abandon. She does not close her eyes and hope for the best, but paints from a distance, studying the canvas for long periods of time. The freedom in her work is quite controlled. When she can make herself available to herself, when she can get into the act of painting and be free in the act, then she wants to know what her brush

is doing.' I am sure that many artists experience much the same in the way they work. But to see it all written about and turned into a mystique makes me feel rather irreverent towards the preciosity surrounding a simple act of ' making.'

The first thing that one realizes going around the New York galleries is that the so-called New Painting is the accepted style. It is not ' rebel ' any more. The canvases are enormous in size and the styles of the different painters are often indistinguishable from each other. However the leaders of the movement usually are recognizable. I had to admit that the work of Jackson Pollock does stand by itself, if only by reason of the daemonic energy that excites the canvas. In his later period he left the medium of oil painting and used house paint and various emulsions suitable to his purposes. The movement in his work is purely arm movement but it is remarkably complex. I liked the work of Grace Hartigan, a painter who owes little to Pollock either in technique or intention. I liked her colour and very well-knit design.

Since the death of Jackson Pollock in a motor accident in 1956 the artist to supersede him as chef d'école (though owing nothing to him in his style or expression) is generally recognized as being William de Kooning. De Kooning's early work means little to me. I find it unpleasing in paint quality and colour and anguished in expression. His later work has a distinct power. The anguish remains in the nervous, brutal quality of his brush strokes, but there is something personal in has acrid use of colour. His design is both monumental and tense.

The work of Arshile Gorky (died 1948) I particularly liked. Strictly speaking he does not belong to the new school, but it is said that his work had a great influence on de Kooning. There is a definite reference to imagery in his painting, most of it of a highly sexual nature. His line delights in protruberences and hollows much in the same fanciful way as Miro's. But his line is lighter and more sinuous than Miro's and more delicate. His colour is to my taste incredibly lovely and unexpected.

The absence of drawings is very noticeable in the dealers' galleries. The explanation for this I presume to be that for once artists have found it unnecessary to make idea notations. This is understandable when one remembers the scarcity of drawings left by the more ' painterly ' old masters like El Greco or Titian. Franz Kline's paintings therefore come as something of a surprise among the others for his paintings are nothing but drawings. Preferable (I find) to Soulage with whom he is sometimes compared, his colour is limited to black and white and his concern is entirely with ideas of space. His work is tense and dramatic.

Other painters whose work is well known all over the States and accepted in New York, but of whom I am not equipped to talk about,

are such names as Sam Francis, Theodore Stamos, Larry Rivers and Robert Motherwell.

In New York non-figurative painting (of the expressionistic, 'soft abstract' variety) holds undisputed sway. This is not so in San Francisco which next to New York is perhaps the most important centre of working artists. Two West Coast artists whose work I liked very much were Richard Diebenkorn and Nathan Oliveira. Diebenkorn portrays one or two people against an interior or landscape. Like Piero della Francesca his world is a world of essences and as in Piero's work there is the tightest command of assymetrical space. Features are left blank and the total expression is dependent upon the relationship of these self-contained and poised figures with their surroundings. Oliveira depicts isolated figures against an empty background. Sometimes there is an implied horizon very low in the canvas. With these very simple silhouettes he is able to make an extraordinarily dramatic impact.

I have not mentioned Ben Shahn who is one of the few American painters who have been introduced by reproduction to Ireland. But I was surprised there, even with regard to Shahn. In Ireland most people, I understand, like his later work which is more poetic, more abstract and which shows a personal and very emotional use of colour. In America his early social realist work is preferred as being more honest and more within the scope of his talents. However even in his early work there is a highly dramatic grouping of figures against architecture and it seems to me a natural development that his extra-caricature interest should broaden out to an aesthetic-emotional one with the years. One must not forget, though, that in the American criticism there might be a shade of suspicion that he had betrayed 'the cause when it lost fashion'! But whatever the truth be here, my taste follows the Irish one.

Personally I feel that one's reaction to the new painting in New York will largely depend upon one's interpretation of the history of art and one's particular ideas about the artist's relation to tradition. Modern art did, at the commencement of the century, try to recreate a tradition and was unanimous in finding the sources of that tradition in pre-Renaissance art. But since then nothing has gone to make art meaningless so much as the idea of originality contra originality, revolution contra previous revolution. It is both the privilege and the limitation of this generation that the whole history of art is laid out for us in the museums. Is it then a purely arbitrary choice for the artist, which tradition he is to found his art upon? Society has not made it *necessary* that he should choose any one more than another. The great tragedy is that society and the artists are both held in the tight grip of mutual disregard. But until the artist finds a *necessity* implied in his finding from tradition and its relation to his present state he will be the

slave of fashionable cliques. There is no reason for him to be otherwise. As the playwright Robert Bolt writes : 'the radical rejects the status quo and unless this is done in the name of a definite vision of what the individual person is and what he is not being allowed to be, rejection degenerates into a posture, no less complacent than the Establishment itself'. Forms of art (as is evident in the art of the East) do not become dead by their repetition, except through an inherent weakness in themselves or the lack of necessity to the spirit who conceived them. The strength that artists have found in traditions lay in the organic modifying of the forms and a watchfulness less the spirit betray and squander both itself and the forms.

The whole point of the artist's relation to tradition is not perhaps irrelevant to the work of Morris Graves. In a unique way Graves does not squander himself and every step towards the unknown that he makes is based on the surest integrity and self-knowledge.

Morris Graves was born in the North-West, a part of America which remained comparatively primitive till recently. It is here that his art first took roots in a contact with unspoilt nature, a contact that has often been necessary for him to renew. The imagery in his work is almost entirely limited to birds, fishes and other small living things. Up till now the birds have predominated. But these are no common birds ; they are Birds of the Inner Eye, Blind Birds and, by implication, Seeing Birds.

Early in his life Graves visited Japan and came into contact with its art. Perhaps this has been the most formative experience in his life. Ever since, his work has looked to the East. But the sense of past tradition is not for Graves a comfortable and stabilizing influence. It is a sense of the profoundest spiritual unquiet. As in little modern work I know there is a sense of the power of religion and particularly of the civilization it gave.

The suggestion is that this rich world is almost lost to us completely . . . almost. Graves is very conscious of this spiritual past. Other artists have made the nude, or still life, or the human condition their subject. Graves subject is, in a sense, the civilizing value of other civilizations.

Perhaps if we take a look at the art of the East in its relation to Western art and ideas of art we can more readily understand Graves's contribution. Not only is Oriental art different in subject matter and in its lack of emotionalism to our own. There has been in the East a different conception of style, an innocence of history that removes it from our understanding. A quotation from Ananda Coomaraswamy might be helpful here. ' The uses and significance of works of art may remain the same for millennia, and yet we can often date and place a work of art at first glance. Human idiocyncracy is then the explanation

of style and stylistic sequences : ' style is the man '. Styles are the bases of our histories of art, which are written like other histories, to flatter our human vanity. But the artist whom we have in view (Christian or Oriental) is innocent of history and unaware of the existence of stylistic sequences. Styles are the accident and by no means the essence of art ; the free man (bound to God) is not trying to express himself, but that which was to be expressed. Our (Western) conception of art as essentially the expression of personality, our whole view of Genius, our impertinent curiosities about the artist's private life, all these things are the product of a perverted individualism and prevent us understanding the nature of Mediaeval and Oriental art. The modern mania for attribution is the expression of a Renaissance conceit and a nineteenth century humanism '. Into this delicate and religiously minded Eastern world the Westerner Graves brings his consciousness of history. It is evident that Graves did not choose : he allowed the Eastern tradition to choose him and he remained a selfconscious Westerner even while he was chosen. The purpose of intuition and communion with things, and thereby with God that the art of the East satisfied for its society, now becomes commented on and used to the religious purpose that we Westerners may see ' . . . the qualities of our own mysterious capacities which direct us towards ultimate reality '. In this modern selfconsciousness of Morris Graves we have what must be the most moving swan song to the past art of the East.

It would be tempting, before ending this article, to try to follow up some of the suggested relationships between the present American scene and the work being done by the artists, but this is beyond the scope allowed to me. Yet there is to my way of feeling something unreal about this scene. Certainly America is the country of the present, but in a peculiar way it seems to belong to no time at all. Before you have comprehended the present it is behind you. Such is the pace of life in America that you must build for the future. And what is the Future : the vast need of millions of consumers, the fears and hopes of that vague and amorphous being ' the American Public ' ? You must take tranquillizers to avoid Tomorrow's crises, you must invest against Tomorrow's insecurities, say the advertisements.

It may not seem too facile a generalization to make, that for both the artist and for the individual citizen the world of ' things ' has become meaningless. If you approach an average American tourist and ask him what he feels about these ' things ' he will no doubt answer that he loves them all. But in the States things are to be used, not to be recognized for themselves. The pair of socks that our grandmother would darn till the original material was invisible, the car that would be used till it could no more be repaired, are now thrown away and replaced by new ones which are purposely made *not* to last. They are

made in greater numbers and with proportionately less personal care by the people who make them, than ever before. In this way the very solid and material world that our fathers trod has gradually been shifted from under everyone's feet. The interests of people now are not only in homemaking, but in all sorts of cloudy pastimes like ' being well adjusted ', ' having balanced sex relationships ', ' being a personality guy ', and in general avoiding suffering and particularly that worst form of it ' loneliness '. It is odd that the materialism of the most high-powered industrial society has led to a strange de-materialization of the objective world.

Art has naturally become subjective, complex and highly self-conscious. I would say dangerously so. The attitude to things carries over to paintings. American artists have a very different attitude to the work they do than Europeans. If the paint cracks on one canvas, they can as easily do another. It is not among their intentions to create timelasting masterpieces. It is enough that doing the work serves the purpose of the moment.

Finally, may I ask the reader to beg, borrow or steal some reproductions of American painters. In this age of speed when styles of art cross the Atlantic in a year, artists still often remain ignorant of any actual work done in the countries outside their own. Paris is ignorant of London, London of Berlin, New York of London, and Dublin usually of the lot. Before I visited America I hardly knew any of the names I have mentioned here, yet there is not one of these names that is not well known in the States.

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Hopper and *Shahn :* Penquin Modern Painters

WOODTOWN MANOR
(for Morris Graves)

By JOHN MONTAGUE

I

Here, the delicate dance of silence,
The quick step of the robin,
The sudden skittering rush of the wren:
Minute essences move in and out of creation
Until the skin of soundlessness forms again.

Part order, part wilderness,
Water creates its cadenced illusion
Of glaucous, fluent growth;
Fins raised, as in a waking dream,
Bright fish probe their painted stream.

Imaginary animals harbour here:
The young fox coiled in its covert,
Bright-eyed and mean, the baby bird:
The heron, like a tilted italic,
Illuminating the gospel of the absurd.

And all the menagerie of the living marvellous:
Stone shape of toad,
Flicker of insect life,
Shift of wind-touched grass
As though a beneficent spirit stirred.

II

Twin deities hover in Irish air
Reconciling poles of east and west;
The detached and sensual Indian God,
Franciscan dream of gentleness:
Gravity of Georgian manor
Approves, with classic stare,
Their dual discipline of tenderness.

III

Courtesy of evening light brings
Such perspectives to a spatial blaze:
Pattern of trees and variegated wall
Kindle to a soft amaze;
Water spreads ring on widening ring
Of silence, until images commingle
In a darkening tide of wings.

The Poetry of Patrick Kavanagh

by BASIL PAYNE

THE appearance—thirteen years after his last collection—of a new book of poems by Patrick Kavanagh[1] has, as the publishers' announcement mentions, given many readers in Britain their first opportunity to buy Kavanagh's work in collected form. The new collection has been well received by reviewers in Britain, and was the Summer choice of the Poetry Book Society. In Ireland, *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling* has also received favourable notices. This, one hopes, will encourage the relatively small number of persons here who actually read poetry, not only to buy the new volume, but also to re-read Kavanagh's earlier work. A re-assessment of Kavanagh's achievement seems overdue. This essay is an attempt at such a re-assessment.

When Patrick Kavanagh's first important collection of poems, *A Soul for Sale*, was published by Macmillan in 1947, it was enthusiastically received. It was not, of course, Kavanagh's first book of verse : *Ploughman and Other Poems*, a collection of early lyrics, had already appeared in 1936, but this was a slight work of honest, unpretentious competence. Despite, however, the assessment of one reviewer of *A Soul for Sale* that no comparable collection of importance had come from Ireland since the death of Yeats, the attitude of many of our present Irish critics and poets towards Kavanagh's poems has been apathetic or even frankly hostile, e.g.—'There is one very fine poet in this country who can survive comparison with such writers as Edwin Muir and John Crowe Ransom. He is not, I regret, Patrick Kavanagh '.[2] Other Irish critics have, however, been more impressed. Mr James Plunkett contributed a very fine appraisal of ' The Great Hunger ' to *The Bell*, March 1952, which, however, concerned itself more with the sociological importance than the poetic merits of the poem ; Mr Anthony Cronin provided a sensitive and excellent article on Kavanagh's work in the issue of *Nimbus*[3] in which almost half of the poems in the most recent collection were first published. (A further study by Mr John Montague was published in *Poetry Chicago* a few years ago, but unfortunately, I have not been able to procure a copy.) Too often, however, Kavanagh's

[1] *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling and Other Poems* by Patrick Kavanagh. London : Longmans. 1960. Pp. 44. 10s. 6d.

[2] Dr Denis Donoghue in *The Month*, March 1957.

[3] Innocence and Experience, the Poetry of Patrick Kavanagh (*Nimbus*, Winter 1956).

stature as a poet has tended to be denigrated by Irish readers and aspirant poets—possibly perhaps because his colourful personality and his controversial journalism have deflected attention from its fulcrum, the poet, to the swingboats he stubbornly pushes under our noses.

The collection, *A Soul for Sale*, is a slim volume of some fifty odd pages, roughly half of which is taken up by Kavanagh's longest and most ambitious poem, ' The Great Hunger '. The others, eighteen in number, are all poems of clarity, and even austerity, of style, but palpitating with the vigour and freshness of ' illuminated innocence '—even when they are concerned with the most adult experience. Their outstanding qualities are candour and intensity—qualities not sufficient of themselves to make great poetry, but which, allied to an exceptional technical accomplishment, can generate universal significance from the most everyday experience—the stuff of all real poetry.

' The Great Hunger ' is Kavanagh's longest and most ambitious poem. Asked what it is *about*, one might answer that it is a relentless and unequivocal picture of Patrick Maguire, an Irish ' peasant ploughman, who is half a vegetable ' ; a slave to his bitter acres which possess him body and soul ; subjected to the domination of an aged matriarch, of his sparse lands and of the externals of his religion; cheated, too, in turn by each of his three captors ; an old, lonely and hard-working bachelor, for whom our hearts cry out with Kavanagh's

> Watch him, watch him, that man on a hill whose spirit
> Is a wet sack flapping about the knees of time.
> He lives that his little fields may stay fertile when his own body
> Is spread in the bottom of a ditch under two coulters in Christ's name.

' The Great Hunger ' is about this ; but it is also about much more. It is about the loneliness and frustration that has a niche in all our hearts and engulfs some of us ; it is, at the same time, about the mysterious powers of love and humility ; the tendril beauty and the raw savagery of nature ; the self-deception of the heart of man ; the whip of faith to the flagging spirit ; the *holiness* of the Imagination. It is told in a taut, realistic and distinctly personal style, which gives it the excitement of an epic and the intensity of a pure lyric.

For the reader's convenience the poem is divided into fourteen sections, but the divisions are of little importance. The presentation is in many ways cinemascopic—the general background and landscape projected on a wide screen, and against this background numerous close shots taken of the principal protagonists at the daily, monthly and yearly round of toil, idle diversion, or ' quiet desperation '. The flash-back from our first introduction to Maguire at the age of sixty-five gathering potatoes with his men on a hillside on an October afternoon, to his youth, thirties and middle-age, is a well-tried device, but one

which is eminently successful here, where the poet's sharp projection of the beauty in the endless procession of the seasons is so skilfully interwoven with the sad procession of Maguire's disappointment and loneliness to his imminent defeat. And yet, despite the despondent moralistic tone in the last few lines of the poem

> No hope, no lust.
> The hungry field
> Screams the apocalypse of clay
> In every corner of this land.

our ultimate feeling is not that we have witnessed a study of failure ; the society responsible for the tragedy of Maguire is censured by the poet, but the heart of the poem is *a presentation of the situation* in full dispassion of intellect and compassion of feeling, rather than *the posing of a solution*. One is reminded of Emily Dickenson, or perhaps Tchehov. The enduring power of love, in spite of whatever mere peripheral experience of it is superimposed by sinister, extraneous forces, is implicit in the poem. For, as Tchehov says, ' One would need to be God to decide which are the failures and which are the successes in life '.

The most remarkable technical achievement in ' The Great Hunger ' is, perhaps, its unity—the conclusion is itself contained in the opening line of the poem :

> Clay is the word and clay is the flesh.

In such realistic writing where the movement is from the particular to the universal, there is no room for the roses, eagles, fur or faeces of the symbolists. The image is valid in its own right ; its power is in its startling matter-of-factness:

> A dog lying on a torn jacket under a heeled-up cart,
> A horse nosing along the posied headland, trailing
> A rusty plough. Three heads hanging between wide-apart legs.

Already, on the first page of the poem, a *tension* is generated, which maintained with remarkable skill and consistency throughout, and relieved only by occasional deliberate alterations in rhythm which Kavanagh cleverly interposes—as he occasionally lets our imaginations sidle with Maguire's from the main predicament :

> The goldfinches on the railway paling were worth looking at—
> A man might imagine then
> Himself in Brazil and these the birds of paradise
> And the Amazon and the romance traced on the school map lived again.

Then we are jerked back violently to the treadmill again, as a crumpled leaf from the whitethorn bushes

> Darts like a frightened robin

or Maguire's mother, 'Tall hard as a Protestant spire', comes
down the stairs barefoot at the kettle-call
And talked to her son sharply: "Did you let
The hens out, you?"

And so, back again to the peasant's routine; to the growing crops and 'the ridges he never loved'. Nobody, we are told,

will ever know how much tortured poetry
the pulled weeds on the ridge wrote
Before they withered in the July sun.
Nobody will ever read the wild, sprawling, scrawling
mad woman's signature.
The hysteria and the boredom of the enclosed nun of his thought.
Like the afterbirth of a cow stretched on a branch in the wind
Life dried in the veins of these women and men.

The image of the animal's afterbirth may seem an obvious one for a poet who has himself worked as a farmer to choose. Its impact, however, is well judged. The tragedy of Maguire, and of all the lonely or frustrated whose prototype he is, is that superficially it seems a mere backwash of tragedy, going unnoticed because it is repeated thousands of times everywhere:

No mad hooves galloping in the sky
But the weak, washy way of true tragedy—
A sick horse nosing around the meadow for a clean place to die.

One is reminded of Auden's *Musée des Beaux Arts*

even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

Kavanagh, being a poet-artist, must, of course, do more than merely show us Maguire's predicament; he must present his peasant tragic-hero to us in all the complexities of our fallen human nature. Our compassion for Maguire must embrace sympathy and understanding for his sins and failings; but the sins and failings must be identified for what they are; no more and no less. Kavanagh, wisely I think, does not shirk this fact: Maguire

Suspicious in his youth as a rat near strange bread
When girls laughed

cannot walk the easy road to destiny. His sin of lonely lechery is committed, admitted, and committed again. But (again rightly),

Kavanagh does not become hysterical about sex ; the temptations of middle-age are different from those of youth, but man is equally vulnerable to them ; and one falls :

> The priest from the altar called Patrick Maguire's name
> To hold the collecting box in the chapel door
> During all the Sundays in May.
> His neighbours envied him his holy rise,
> But he walked down from the church with affected indifference
> And took the measure of heaven angel-wise.

But if Kavanagh is a realist, he is also a Catholic to whom the words faith, hope and charity have real meaning : religion is not Maguire's bugbear. It is the matriarchal-circumscribed insistence on its externals which deludes. Kavanagh is, in fact, that (nowadays) rare thing, a good *religious* poet ; religious in the sense that Shakespeare and Keats and Blake are all in their different ways religious poets, no less than Vaughan, and St John of the Cross and Gerald Manley Hopkins ; religious, even perhaps in the sense that Thomas Merton found Joyce religious, despite Joyce's apostacy ; religious, again, despite some of the neo-existentialist futilities in ' The Great Hunger ' :

> Sitting on a wooden gate
> Sitting on a wooden gate
> Sitting on a wooden gate
> He didn't give a damn.
> Said whatever came into his head
> Said whatever came into his head
> Said whatever came into his head
> And inconsequently sang.

And again,

> Evening at the cross-roads—
> Heavy heads nodding out words as wise
> As the rumination of cows after milking.
> From the ragged surface a boy picks up
> A piece of gravel and stares at it—and then
> He flings it across the elm tree on to the railway.
> It means nothing,
> Not a damn thing.

In suggesting that Kavanagh is a fine religious poet, I do not, of course, imply that his *themes* are specifically religious, although most of the poems in *A Soul for Sale* are most recognizably Catholic in atmosphere —as in Langland and Chaucer. ' The Great Hunger ', especially, has some fine and courageous religious imagery, e.g.

> These men know God the Father in a tree
> The Holy Spirit is the rising sap
> And Christ will be the green leaves that will come
> At Easter from the sealed and guarded tomb.

Such sharp spiritual realism not only enriches the fabric of the poem, but following on the image of the ' dead sparrow ' and ' old waistcoat ' among the blackthorn shadows in the ditch, tightens the texture as effectively as Eliot's sudden image of the children ' hidden excitedly containing laughter ' in *Four Quartets*. Kavanagh has, in a way, something in common with the later Eliot, not only in his choice of the right words and the right tone when his language is most direct and simple, but in his insistence on prayer and humility and forgiveness in the business of living:

> O let us kneel where the blind ploughman kneels
> And learn to live without despairing
> In a mud-walled space—
> Illiterate, unknown and unknowing.

But something more is required. There is the injunction to positive love and positive virtue (like Eliot's ' We must be still and still moving/ into another intensity/For a further union, a deeper communion . . . ') :

> He helped a poor woman whose cow
> Had died on her :
> He dragged home a drunken man on a winter's night
> And one rare moment he heard the young people playing on the railway stile
> And he wished them happiness and whatever they most desired from life.

It would be wrong, however, for anyone (as yet, perhaps, unfamiliar with ' The Great Hunger ') to imagine from this that Kavanagh is a mere Catholic or sociological apologist masquerading in verse. The poetry, as all good poetry should, exists for its own sake. The fact that the poet's personal poetic vision also embodies an orthodox spiritual point of view does not at all lessen the quality of the poetry.

Occasionally, however, Kavanagh does comment specifically on the Catholic scene and the Church, as in ' Father Mat ', or a much later poem, ' House Party to Celebrate the Destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland '. In the latter he whimsically satirizes a woman novelist and her fulminating pretensions—

> Her book was out, and did she devastate
> the Roman Catholic Church on every page
> And in Seamus's house they met to celebrate
> With giggles high the dying monster's rage.

Meantime, Kavanagh notes laconically, in far-off parishes of Cork and Kerry

> Old priests walked homeless in the winter air
> As Seamus poured another pale dry sherry.

It is, of course, a minor poem of Kavanagh's, but interesting in that it shows forcibly his insistence on truth in things minor as well as major ; an insistence which, however, now recognizes truth as ' the most entertaining type of communication ', rather than the bludgeon of the poet-sitting-in judgement (as in ' A Wreath for Tom Moore's Statue '). ' Father Mat ', an early poem of about a hundred lines, is, however, of considerable significance in that it is one of the few poems in the collection *A Soul for Sale* which gives a hint of Kavanagh's later development. Here, instead of the spancelled peasant, Maguire, we are given a picture of an old country priest hearing Confessions on a sunny evening in May, hemmed in not by the fields, this time ; nor by the tedious litanies of sins ; nor yet by the spiritual pride of the consciously-aspiring saint ; hemmed in, however, by the dancer of temptation ' that dances in the hearts of men ', to which all of us are exposed, whether the temptation is that of the poet to tear himself loose from fields that nurtured him, yet ' burgled his bank of youth ' ; or of the man who is not a poet to abandon the truth which he knows lingers vaguely but persistently in his heart. In this poem, Kavanagh is, in fact, asserting the identity of the real world and the imagination, as Keats in the famous letter to Bailey said he was sure of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. This is the kernal of Kavanagh's importance. The poet must not only aspire to truth ; he must *dedicate* himself to truth, and even—without blasphemy—*be* truth. For the ordinary man any deflection from truth is regrettable or sinful ; for the poet it is, poetically speaking, sacrilegious. This righteous conviction and dedication cannot, of itself, *make* a poet ; but without it no poet will ever achieve universality. How about Kavanagh ? In a hundred years' time—if there be a hundred years' time—I think Kavanagh, despite his slim output, is as likely to be read as Yeats. ' Yeats,' says Kavanagh, ' was a poet, and he invented many writers. He invented Synge, and Lady Gregory, and he was largely responsible for F. R. Higgins '. Many will quarrel with this dismissal of Synge ; personally I find the prevalent near-idolatry of his *kitsch* dramaturgy very puzzling. Might one venture further and say that Yeats himself was the makings of a very great poet—and then he invented Yeats ? Perhaps.

Apart from ' The Great Hunger ', the poems in *A Soul for Sale* which project the earlier Kavanagh ethos most sharply are, I think, ' Stony Grey Soil ' ; ' A Wreath for Tom Moore's Statue ' and ' Temptation in Harvest '. In them, we find the poet arrogantly striding in gaunt grandeur into the market-place, and overturning the traders' tables where ' fake love, fake thoughts, fake ideal ' are wantonly and vicariously purveyed, e.g. ' A Wreath for Tom Moore's Statue ' :

The cowardice of Ireland is in his statue
No poet's honoured when they wreath this stone,
An old shopkeeper who has dealt in the marrow-bone
Of his neighbours looks at you,
Dim-eyed, degenerate, he is admiring his god.
The bank manager who pays his monthly confession
The tedious narrative of a mediocrity's passion
The shallow, safe sins that never become a flood
To sweep themselves away . . .

It is very intense, and savagely certain of the poet's own integrity. But for all its power of directness it is, I think, less effective than the oblique, satirical approach to the subject by, say, Mervyn Wall in *The Unfortunate Fursey*, or the hilarious incisiveness of Myles na Gopaleen in *Faustus Kelly*. Kavanagh's later poetry has, as Mr Anthony Cronin points out, great gains of subtlety, irony and humour, without sacrificing any of its earlier imaginative intensity. The difference can perhaps be explained by saying that in his later work Kavanagh *transcends* his suffering. Certainly, earlier poems such as ' Stony Grey Soil ' would, but for the sheer brilliance of the technical accomplishment, be destroyed by their own larvae of self-pity ;

O stony grey soil of Monaghan
The laugh from my love you thieved ;
You took the gay child of my passion
And gave me your clod-conceived.
You flung a ditch on my vision
Of beauty, love and truth.
O stony grey soil of Monaghan
You burgled my bank of youth !

Yet, the tone is removed from the *saeva indignatio* of Swift. Kavanagh, even in the early poems, is, behind the fury, capable of much love, much vitality and much fresh innocent intensity, as in ' A Christmas Childhood ' :

My father payed the melodion ;
My mother milked the cows.
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the virgin Mary's blouse.

' Temptation in Harvest ', a poem of just less than a hundred lines is concerned with a predicament which has been a recurrent motif in much of Kavanagh's later work both in verse and prose : the poet, troubled and self-reproachful for his decision to uproot himself from the environ-

ment in which he has been nurtured and set off for his Utopia of Art and Letters, e.g.

> And yet, having sown a couple of acres of barley in May I walked off. I felt that I shouldn't have done it, that I was acting by some untruthful principle that had been created.[1]

The dilemma is posed forcibly by the image in the opening lines :

> A poplar leaf was spiked upon a thorn
> Above the hedge like a flag of surrender
> That the year held out. I was afraid to wonder
> At capitulation in a field of corn.

It is a poem which illustrates exceptionally well Kavanagh's *power* over words—a near-perfect equivalence of thought and expression.[2] It is, in a way, a poem in the romantic tradition. The sudden appearance of the old woman who whispers from a bush to the poet to

> stand in
> The shadow of the ricks until she passes ;
> You cannot eat what grows upon Parnassus—
> And she is going there as sure as sin.

shatters both the seeming security of the real world of the blackberry lane-way which the poet knows, and also the seeming glory of the City of the Kings to which he is being drawn. As in the German *Novelle*, she becomes (imaginatively anyway) an emissary from the supernatural who has crossed the border to reality ; the frontier separating the real and the imagined becomes more and more tenuous, and the spirit is left trapped in a no-man's-land of confusion and imminent disaster. In the German *Novelle* the supernatural element is capable of two contrasting interpretations. It can be a power external to, and independent of, man, or it may be taken as a product of the irrational activity of man's mind. A similar duality of tension is generated in Kavanagh's poem :

> Earth, earth ! I dragged my feet off the ground.
> Labourers, animals armed with farm tools,
> Ringed me. The one open gap had larch poles
> Across it now by memory secured and bound
> The flaggers in the swamp were the reserves
> Waiting to lift their dim nostalgic arms
> The moment I would move.

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[1] Patrick Kavanagh : From Monaghan to the Grand Canal (*Studies*, Spring 1959).

[2] In this, I differ from the view of Dr Denis Donoghue (writing in *The Month*, March 1957) that ' the main defect in Mr Kavanagh's writing ' is ' an inadequate grasp of the potentialities of language as a penetrative instrument '.

Even the atmosphere in the closing passage of the poem has, behind its realism, a romantic strain reminiscent of Keats's Nightingale Ode, as Kavanagh going ' to follow her who winked at me ', turns on a September evening

> Away from the ricks, the sheds, the cabbage-garden.
> The stones in the street, the thrush song in the tree,
> The potato-pits, the flaggers in the swamp.

'Temptation in Harvest' is possibly the most completely satisfying in *A Soul for Sale*. It is not surprising that the experience which poem engendered it should continue to preoccupy Kavanagh so persistently.

* * *

' All we learn from experience ', says Kavanagh, writing in *Nonplus*, ' is the way from simplicity back to simplicity '. It is not a new or startling statement. The path of the greatest poets, saints and mystics has always been from the trust and acceptance of childhood, through doubt and ' dark night of the soul ' back again to the serenity and acceptance of childhood. Back, however, to a different serenity ; different, in that it is not an accidental endowment, but a state of grace struggled for and realized. ' The agonizing pincer-jaws of heaven ' —as Kavanagh put it in an early poem—are as yet not quite breached, but they are no longer agonizing ; the intuition of ultimate reality, of which the pilgrim was before but vaguely aware, is now sure and confident, and can be proclaimed confidently by the poet through symbols from the world of common experience. The poetry is more direct, subtle, humorous and generous. Such poetry seldom has a wide audience ; ostensibly it is often too ebullient to be considered really important by many serious critics. Yet who could quarrel with Kavanagh's statement that

> Laughter is the most poetic thing in life, that is the right kind of loving laughter. When, after a lifetime of struggle we produce the quintessence of ourselves, it will be something gay and young.[1]

Certainly not Shakespeare. Not Blake. Not Dylan Thomas. Patrick Kavanagh's poetry since *A Soul for Sale* is a progression from experience to innocence ; from gaunt grandeur to rectitude ; from the grip of the earlier grim, land-locked myth to the liberation of the passively recognized, and gladly embraced, state of holiness of the Imagination.

A provocative and important essay of Kavanagh's, From Monaghan to the Grand Canal published in *Studies* in Spring 1959, is in many ways

[1] Patrick Kavanagh : From Monaghan to the Grand Canal (*Studies*, Spring 1959).

his poetic statement of faith. In it, amongst other things, he comments somewhat severely on his earlier work, especially ' Pegasus ', the opening poem in *A Soul for Sale*. ' One can see,' he says, ' the embarrassing impertinence and weakness of it all, the dissolute character whining '. Continuing, he comments that ' there has always been a big market in England for the synthetic Irish thing ', and declaims the poetic merits of having ' roots in the soil '.

> What are our roots ? What is our material ?
> Real roots lie in our capacity for love and its abandon.
> The material itself has no special value ; it is what our imagination and love does to it.

It is easy to fall into the temptation of being impatient with a writer who disowns earlier work so insistently, and even facetiously. O'Casey, for instance, with *The Plough and the Stars* and *Juno and the Paycock* behind, cuts an arrogant, and at times ludicrous figure, as he proudly hollers out the dawn of the new O'Casey of *Cock-a-Doodle-Dandy*, or bids us gather in an admiring circle around *The Bishop's Bonfire*. But there is a difference, and Kavanagh's phrase ' the dissolute character whining ' touches upon it. Kavanagh has rightly put the ' whine ' behind him and the new man is, I believe, a better poet. Moreover, this capacity for love and its abandon is undoubtedly one of the most striking qualities of Kavanagh's later poetry. The appearance of *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling* enables us to assess more adequately Kavanagh's real accomplishment as a poet. Until its publication, the poems had to be hunted for in back numbers of literary periodicals, e.g. *Nimbus*, *Encounter*, *Horizon*, *Time and Tide*, and—in Ireland—*Studies*, *The Irish Times* and *Nonplus*. Dispersed so widely, the poems were easily missed or ill-absorbed ; the high quality of the sonnets which re-appear in the new book was too easily diffused in the opacity of some—but not all—of the longer satirical pieces, e.g. ' The Paddiad ', a satire on Irish men-of-letters which, despite some incisive irony, is, I think, largely banal. The banality, however, is not in the *fact* of the satire, but in the fact that it seems merely to bawdlerize in long-winded—but extremely funny—verse, the stil-centre of wounded love which Kavanagh presents with such concentrated precision in the sonnets.

The banal has, however, an important place in life and in art ; in the poet's crucible it can be refined till the granulated residue is ' violently beautiful ', e.g. the sonnet ' Canal Bank Walk ', a poem which must be read many times before its astonishing fusion of thought and rhythm can be fully absorbed :

> **Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal**
> **Pouring redemption for me, that I do**
> **The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal,**
> **Grow with nature again as before I grew.**

Suffering and joy are indistinguishable from each other as they leap together into fusion in the shout of the poet—a shout which is however as artistically controlled in its language as Schiller's ' Ode of Joy ' or Beethoven's great echo of it in the Choral Symphony. Here, Kavanagh tells us, as it were in parenthesis, is

> the Word
> Eloquently new and abandoned to its delirious beat.

How different it all is from the whine of the Romantics, as in Shelly's ' Ode to the West Wind ' :

> Make me they lyre even as the forest is :
> What if my leaves are falling like its own !

Kavanagh's equivalent evocation ?

> O Unworn world enrapture me, encapture me in a web
> Of fabulous grass and eternal voices by a beach,
> Feed the gaping need of my senses, give me ad lib
> To pray unselfconsciously with overflowing speech
> For this sould needs to be honoured with a new dress woven
> From green and blue things and arguments that cannot be proven.

' Canal Bank Walk ' is the first poem in Kavanagh's new collection, and effectively sounds the pitch of the poet's development since *A Soul for Sale*. Whilst the basic impact of Kavanagh's earlier poetry in *A Soul for Sale* is tragic, whereas the impact of his later verse is comic—in the sense that Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a comedy *vis-à-vis*, say, *King Lear* or *Hamlet*—it would be a mistake to imagine that there is a cleavage between the two, either in content or technique. Each has fundamentally the same *inner* vision ; there is merely a shift in form and in emphasis, and a noticeable shedding of naivety. Throughout, Kavanagh is concerned fundamentally with seeing

> the newness that was in every stale thing
> When we looked at it as children ; the spirit-shocking
> Wonder in a black slanting Ulster hill.

That is, the ordinary and the humdrum transmuted and given universal significance by the alchemy of Imagination. The real tragedy for anyone is not to be astonished at a stick carried down a stream,

> Or at the undying difference in the corner of a field.

Yet it has taken thirteen years for these poems to appear in book form. Why ? Partly at least because :

> In Ireland one is up against the fact that very few care for or understand the creative spirit. You can come across by being Irish in manner and spirit, but when you attempt to offer them the real thing it's no go.

> When I started to write what is the real thing three years ago, there was not much response, except possibly from Stephen Spender who described it as ' violently beautiful '.[1]

But, as I have said before, there is no *whine* in these later poems, no indignation that does not include forgiveness ; nothing but pity for what the poet occasionally finds it necessary to satirise, as in these lines from ' Is ' :

> The important thing is not
> To imagine one ought
> Have something to say,
> A *raison d'être*, a plot for the play.
> The only true teaching
> Subsists in watching
> Things moving or just colour
> Without comment from the scholar.
> To look on is enough
> In the business of love.

The ' business of love ' is Kavanagh's fundamental concern as a poet. ' Lovers alone lovers protect ' he says in *Prelude*, one of the more successful of his longer quasi-satirical poems ; quasi, because satire itself is confronted and surmounted in the poet's grim self-analysis :

> But satire is unfruitful prayer,
> Only wild shoots of pity there,
> And you must go inland and be
> Lost in compassion's ecstasy

In ' Yellow Vestment '—another sonnet—he repeats the injunction to love and recognizes its implications

> For love's sake we must only consider whatever widens
> The field of the faithful's activity.

Again, in ' The One ', love is shown as a pale but true reflection of God's Love, yet at the same time contained within the latter :

> Green, blue, yellow and red—
> God is down in the swamps and marshes
> Sensational as April and almost incred-
> ible the flowering of our catharsis.

In another fine sonnet, ' October ', the timelessness of love's mystery and pain is the only truth of which the poet is still certain in middle age as he was at nineteen :

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[1] Patrick Kavanagh : From Monaghan to the Grand Canal (*Studies*, Spring 1959).

O leafy yellowness you create for me
A world that was and now is poised above time,
I do not need to puzzle out Eternity
As I walk this aboreal street on the edge of a town.
The breeze too, even the temperature
And pattern of movement is precisely the same
As broke my heart for youth passing. Now I am sure
Of something. Something will be mine wherever I am.

Kavanagh's great advance in technique is best seen in such poems as 'Auditors In'; 'Intimate Parnassus'; 'The Hero'; 'The Hospital'; 'Dear Folks' and the title-poem 'Come Dance with Kitty Stobling'. In these poems, his judicious handling of the conversational and the cliché-emotion, as well as the cliché-phrase, is superior by far to Auden's, though Auden is generally accepted as a master of this type of technical excellence. Auden, however, in striving to avoid taking himself seriously, swings the pendulum too far towards the jocular; the poem frequently, therefore, misfires (e.g. 'Heavy Date'); one suspects the poet is not really *involved* as he should be. Kavanagh, however, effectively takes a stand of inner peace in the midst of outer confusion

somewhere to stay
Doesn't matter. What is distressing
Is waking eagerly to go nowhere in particular.

The sonnet 'Come Dance with Kitty Stobling' is, in my opinion, not entirely successful despite its brilliantly arresting opening:

No, no, no, I know I was not important as I moved
Through the colourful country, I was but a single
Item in the picture, the namer not the beloved.

It is, however, an extremely fine poem with an elasticity of rhythm and phrase which compels attention.

O dance with Kitty Stobling I outrageously
Cried out-of-sense to them, while their timorous paces
Stumbled behind Jove's page boy paging me.
I had a very pleasant journey, thank you sincerely
For giving me my madness back, or nearly.

The poem, 'Intimate Parnassus', though less arresting on first reading, seems to me to resolve the poet's predicament with more mature assurance:

Men are what they are, and what they do
Is their own business. If they praise
The gods or jeer at them, the gods can not
Be moved, involved or hurt.

And again, the injunction to love, but to be controlled in one's art :

> Poet, you have reason to be sympathetic—
> Count them the beautiful unbroken
> And then forget them
> As things aside from the main purpose
> Which is to be
> Passive, observing with a steady eye.

Yeats, in ' Under Ben Bulben ', is scarcely more indomitable.

In ' The Hero ' the poet is shown as

> an ordinary man, a man full of honour

refusing to be corrupted by those who would make him their false idol :

> They had the wrong ideas of a god
> Who once all know becomes ridiculous.
> —I am as obvious as an auctioneer
> Dreaming of twenty thousand pounds a year.
> At this they roared in the streets and became quite hysterical
> And he knew he was the cause of this noise—
> Yet he had acted reasonably, had performed no miracle,
> Had spoken in a conventional voice,
> And he said : surely you can
> See that I am an ordinary man ?

But in the end his contempt for the mean and the petty and the insincere, with their ludicrous cheer and sick applause, dissolves ; even satire seems irrelevant. ' Humility ', as Eliot tells us, ' is endless '. And Kavanagh echoes the sentiment :

> And for the insincere city
> He felt a profound pity.

Humility, then, and innocence and compassion are the beginning, the middle, and the end of the long road of experience. A simple formula ? An easy solution ? No. Kavanagh's depth of psychological insight never falters, and the mystery pulses all the time behind the casual phrase, the everyday effort ; as the closing couplet of the excellent sonnet, ' The Hospital ', has it :

> For we must record love's mystery without claptrap,
> Snatch out of time the passionate transitory.[1]

[1] When this sonnet first appeared in *Nimbus* the final couplet read ' For we must set in words the mystery without claptrap/Experience so light-hearted appears transitory '. The new version is, I think, much stronger.

Kavanagh, it may be protested, is too self-consciously the artist in these later poems to be valid or stimulating as a poet. The poems themselves are the best answer to this criticism. The work of the best artists and the best poets, as their art matures, strives towards a quality, which, for the want of a more satisfactory description, I shall call ' absoluteness '. Ultimately, they are humble before the discovery that all poetry and all art, however near-perfect it may strive to be, is a compromise. There is much in common between the incarcerated artist fumbling towards expression and the sin-weighted soul stumbling towards God. The attempt itself is an integral part of the artist's achievement and the sinner's redemption ; as such, it also must be included in the artist's work. Such *self-awareness* is an outstanding quality of much of the best modern poetry. Jacques Maritain (writing on Baudelaire) says that the ' self-awareness and sense of its own freedom that poetry has gained in modern times, place him from the very start at the centre of the citadel '. Likewise, Kavanagh's ultimate appeal—and importance—as a poet is the appeal to the experience of poetry itself. Even his astonishing development of technique must be identified, as Kavanagh himself claims, as ' a spiritual quality, a condition of mind, or an ability to invoke a condition of mind '.

It is this latter quality which gives Kavanagh's poetry its merits of *freedom* and *uniqueness*. Or, to quote Maritain again (in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*), poetry, as such, is served by the intellect, but has its own mode of knowledge. Neither is it subject to religion, since it is in its essence free. Faith and the intellect, however, affect poetry *indirectly* via the whole life of any man that poetry inhabits. Pursued to its extreme, we can see, as Kavanagh admits, that Plato may not be far wrong in suggesting that the poet is a menace. But, to quote Kavanagh again, there is little danger of his menacing Dublin or Ireland generally ! Nevertheless, as he says in ' Dear Folks ' :

> The main thing is to continue,
> To walk Parnassus right into the sunset
> Detached in love where pygmies cannot pin you
> To the ground like Gulliver. So good luck and cheers.

Mr Kavanagh's Progress

by JOHN JORDAN

> 'The people didn't want a poet, but a fool,
> yes they could be doing with one of those.'
> *The Green Fool* (1938)

> 'The story of the heifer that came back is nearly symbolic of my life. I have failed many times to get my cattle to the fair.'
> —Ibid.

IT would be foolish for the present writer to pretend that he is not personally acquainted with Mr Patrick Kavanagh. It would be even more foolish to write about him as if his slight acquaintance gave any right to attempt an authoritative interpretation of a small but very difficult body of work, on the grounds of extraneous assumptions as to character or personality.[1] What follows, it is hoped, is based on nothing other than the evidence of texts, and as far as is humanly possible, the estimate offered will be uninfluenced by that folk-lore which is Dublin's special contribution to the misunderstanding of genius, whether or not the genius be comprehensive (as with Yeats) or fragmentary and erratic (as with Kavanagh).

Patrick Kavanagh's first volume of poems was *Ploughman and Other Poems* (Macmillan, 1936). He was thirty-one and still living in Monaghan, where he practised the craft of cobbler and farmer. *Ploughman* shows evidence of a small but pure talent, remarkably unclogged by the mists (fairy and mental) which, together with stage-winds, property moons and stars, and synthetic twilights, make the going and the visibility so difficult in the bulk of minor Irish verse he might as a neophyte well have imitated. He does, admittedly, in one poem see Thomas Aquinas in the wind-spaces but that in itself is a healthy sign, when he might have been seeing one of the amoral ladies of our Saga literature, or even, under AE's influence, the Earth Mother. (Mother Earth and the Earth Mother embody two vastly different efforts of the imagination.) The chief significance of Mr Kavanagh in 1936—and in 1960 for a good many foolish people—was that he was an autodidact (so far as poetry was concerned) who worked on the land and wrote verses. I hazard, in humility, the guess that for some years Mr Kavanagh was immature enough to play up to a drawing-room conception of the primitive. In *The Green Fool* he tells us of 'a couple of villainous journalists':

[1] Such an interpretation, based on faded tales of twenty years ago, has been offered recently (July 24, 1960) by Mr Micheál MacLiammoir in *The Sunday Times*.

> The latter never missed an opportunity of putting a lurid paragraph in the Sunday newspapers about me. I must be an interesting character, I thought. So I decided that in future if I was to be exploited I should do the exploiting myself.

I should not be surprised if Mr Kavanagh flinches at a bare reference to, let alone quotation from, *The Green Fool*. Much of it makes painful reading, especially those pages in which he records his opinions of Irish contemporaries. The Kavanagh of 1960 can scarcely wish to recall that he was once an admirer of F. R. Higgins, ' one of the best of the young Irish poets '.

But *The Green Fool* cannot be written off as a young man's aberration. It is Mr Kavanagh's most successful attempt at sustained prose narrative, to my mind of greater merit than the novel *Tarry Flynn* (The Pilot Press 1948) which covers a deal of the same ground. The latter book has perhaps more cohesion but it is rather more self-regarding, and lacks the bright and clear transfer effects of *The Green Fool*. And in this openly autobiographical book there are laid bare the elements of Kavanagh, the pieties and predispositions which have been the sustenance of his talent and the architecture of its products. In his later verse, Mr Kavanagh has not been afraid of walking naked, as in the beautiful poem ' I Had a Future ', of which more later. The chief value of *The Green Fool* may be the revelation, almost embarrassingly authentic, of a mind at once cunning and naive, suspicious and trusting. I suppose the unsatisfactory term ' peasant ' has to be brought in, sooner or later. *The Green Fool* demonstrates how devious the mind of the peasant can be, and yet how simple when it is released from traditional bondages of land and cattle and family. But it is Mr Kavanagh's mind I am trying to write about, and only quotation and commentary can illustrate that.

Even in this early book there are inklings of his later strengths as a poet. Here he is on the subject of a pig-killing :

> It was a memorable morning ; the blood of dawn was being poured over the hills and of that other blood we only thought how much black-pudding it would make. Our talk had the romantic beauty of reality. We were as close to life and death as we could be.

I can think of no other writer who could get away with a phrase like ' the romantic beauty of reality '. But in no other writer would so flabby a phrase have the backing of a red sky at morning juxtaposed with the blood of stuck-pigs. It will be seen, I hope, that Mr Kavanagh has adhered, increasingly through the years, to the extreme form of the doctrine of ' meanest flower ' as subject-matter for the imagination. Much of this essay will be given to demonstration of his growing awareness of his own inmost preoccupation, and of his attempts, sometimes successful, to create poems, emblematic or discursive, on the theme of

ripening consciousness. It might be said as a general proposition of any worthwhile poet, that he struggles to establish to his own satisfaction the nature of reality. Mr Kavanagh's peculiar status as a poet depends very largely on the freshness of his rediscovery of an axiom. He is archetypical.

* * *

Mr Kavanagh, I believe, is not favourably disposed to the book by which he is best known, *A Soul for Sale* (Macmillan, 1947). This volume includes the long poem 'The Great Hunger,' originally published by the Cuala Press in 1942, and the occasion of a mild scandal. It may be worthwhile to indicate the virtues and oddities of what must remain an important part of the skimpy contribution, outside Joyce and George Moore, made by Irish Catholics to the literature of the English-speaking world.

Despite its adventures with authority, 'The Great Hunger,' is, in substance as well as in structure, a morality. It is about the perversion of the Catholic teaching on sex and marriage, as portrayed in the life of a small farmer Patrick Maguire. The first line 'Clay is the word and clay is the flesh' announces this perversion in a complex way which I have not seen noted. Mr Kavanagh may dislike the critical method known as explication, but I'm afraid his own work needs a good deal of it. The fact that the Word was, and forever is being made Flesh, is the central truth of the Christian Revelation. It is also the prototype of the act of love. Mr Kavanagh's farming community have substituted for love, marriage and birth (which may be allowed to be divine in so far as they mirror the love of the Trinity) 'the passion that never needs a wife', and their symbol, Patrick Maguire, is 'the man who made a field a bride'.

> He lives that his little fields may stay fertile when his own body
> Is spread in the bottom of a ditch under two coulters crossed in
> Christ's Name.

In short this poem is the analysis of an extended blasphemy against Creation. The analysis is not carried out on a consistently high level of relevance and the verse is too often slack, but perhaps Mr Kavanagh has come closer than any other writer outside Joyce to the problem of religion, when it curdles, in Catholic Ireland, and unlike Joyce he attempts to understand the phenomenon, and to treat it with compassion. I also suspect that, if such a paradox is possible, he is an instinctive theologian :

> Once one day in June when he was walking
> Among his cattle in the Yellow Meadow
> He met a girl carrying a basket—
> And he was then a young and heated fellow
> Too earnest, too earnest! He rushed beyond the thing
> To the unreal. And he saw Sin
> Written in letters larger than John Bunyan dreamt of.
> For the strangled impulse there is no redemption.

The quasi-theological bent of Mr Kavanagh's mind may be seen in the line 'He rushed beyond the thing/To the unreal'. The sense of sin when over-active, passes easily enough into sin itself. And this over-active sense of sin is part and parcel of the general spiritual condition of Patrick Maguire's community. It might even be concluded that it is almost the sole thing which *is* truly alive, were it not that Mr Kavanagh's peasants are allowed intimations of glory :

> Yet sometimes when the sun comes through a gap
> These men know God the Father in a tree :
> The Holy Spirit is the rising sap,
> And Christ will be the green leaves that will come
> At Easter from the sealed and guarded tomb.

This is the place to note that Mr Kavanagh's mystique is a little unorthodox : it is difficult to detect at what point a traditional use of analogy shades into an older cult of nature-worship. His Catholic admirers may find it distasteful, but there are indications here and elsewhere in 'The Great Hunger' that the only spiritual illumination these male peasants receive comes not from their devotional practices (which he describes with something closer to tenderness than to irony) but from their Wordsworthian contacts with an imperfectly manifested Nature.

But Mr Kavanagh's vaguely pantheistic (but perhaps Franciscan) approach in this context does not take from the central importance of 'The Great Hunger' as the only major poem of our time by an Irish Catholic (Denis Devlin's 'Lough Derg' might be an exception) to examine the rôle or the subsidence of religion in life. I've harped on this aspect of his poem because what to me seems so obvious has never, to my knowledge, been stated.

The remaining poems of *A Soul for Sale* are of very varying quality. 'Father Mat' is an accomplished exercise in decent religious sentiment, chiefly remarkable for an early statement of the Kavanagh doctrine of common things. A curate is described (as against the old priest Father Mat—Mr Kavanagh has a weakness for old priests) as

> One who was not afraid when the sun opened a flower,
> Who was never astonished
> At a stick carried down a stream
> Or at the undying difference in the corner of a field.

'Pegasus', much admired by young men ten years ago, does not wear well. The parable of the soul for sale to Church or State or 'meanest trade' is marred by romantic complacency. The famous 'Stony Grey Soil' will always be of interest as evidence of how far Mr Kavanagh has advanced, from a belated condition of rebellion, to acceptance of at least part of his past—he has not yet learned to look with serenity on the rebellion itself. In the context of his later development, the most relevant poem is 'Spraying the Potatoes' with its tight if weepy final stanza:

> And poet lost to potato-fields,
> Remembering the lime and copper smell
> Of the spraying barrels he is not lost
> Or till blossomed stalks cannot weave a spell.

I call these lines 'weepy' because they pre-suppose unconvincingly a lost paradise. The mature Kavanagh carries the paradise about within him.

* * * * *

Since 1947 Mr Kavanagh, initially through his Journal in *Envoy*, and later through his own paper *Kavanagh's Weekly*, has become the object of an unhealthy cult, based largely on his wild, uninformed and deliberately provocative generalizations, rather than on a few perceptions of Coleridgian brilliance. He has been vocal also in periodicals such as the *Farmers' Journal* and the *National Observer*, to note only his series of regular contributions.

It is since 1947 also that he has emerged as a considerable verse satirist, with a gift for Byronic rhyme and an equally impressive gift for catching the inflexions of Irish rural and urban speech. The longest of his verse satires are 'The Wake of the Books' (*The Bell*, November 1947) a gay laceration of Censors and Censored, in the form of a semi-expressionistic playlet; 'The Paddiad' (*Horizon*, August 1949), a dissection of Dublin literary cliques, in which the tone is growing more savage, and 'The Christmas Mummers' (*Nimbus*, Winter 1954), another episode in the war of Kavanagh versus the New Bourgeoisie. Of these he has reprinted 'The Paddiad' in his latest book *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling*.[1] Four other satirical pieces may be found in what is practically a small book, the nineteen poems printed in *Nimbus* (Winter, 1956). Somewhat dishonestly, the editors of *Nimbus* failed to point out that these were not new poems, but a gleaning of what the poet had published over the previous eight or nine years. More than half of these nineteen poems appear again in the new book. Of those omitted

[1] Longmans, 10s. 6d.

the most important is 'I Had a Future', which goes back to 1952 and *Kavanagh's Weekly*. Mr Kavanagh, it will be seen, does not waste verse.

'I Had a Future' is symptomatic of Mr Kavanagh's new and imaginatively enriching acceptance of the past and what it has done to him, a fragment of naked autobiography contained in self-knowledge. There can be no more difficult task for the writer than to see himself as he once was, blurred neither by self-pity nor self-abhorrence :

> Show me the stretcher-bed I slept on
> On a room on Drumcondra Road
> Let John Betjeman call for me in a car.

The present writer was a very young man when he first read this poem, and can remember feeling that the reference to Mr Betjeman was over-revelatory. The feeling was of course wrong. The mood of the poem is not one of nostalgia, but of wonder over a former self, a self with ' quarter-seeing eyes ' and ' animal-remembering mind ', and the concrete details about Mr Betjeman and the Drumcondra Road, the stretcher-bed and the car, a hint of luxury against a background of Bohemian frugality, nail down the poet's passionate desire to *understand* that former self. This is Mr Kavanagh's earliest attempt, perhaps, to use verse as an instrument towards the comprehension of his own experience.

Almost all the most recent poems of quality in *Kitty Stobling* are further, more complex attempts to attain a kind of passing self-knowledge. In the superbly jazzy ' Auditors In ' he writes,

> From the sour soil of a town where all roots canker
> I turn away to where the Self reposes
> The placeless Heaven that's under all our noses
> Where we're shut from all the barren anger,
> No time for self-pitying melodrama . . .

leading to the wry gravity of the conclusion,

> I am so glad
> To come so accidentally upon
> My Self at the end of a tortuous road
> And have learned with surprise that God
> Unworshipped withers to the Futile One.

Mr Kavanagh's Self is a very different one from that in *A Soul for Sale*, but he stills has links with the man who praised ' the undying difference in the corner of a field '. This is best illustrated from the sonnet ' The Hospital ', appearing here with some, to my mind, dubious revisions. I quote the sestet as it appeared in *Nimbus*.

This is what love does to things : the Rialto Bridge,
The main gate that was bent by a heavy lorry,
The seat at the back of a shed that was a suntrap.
Naming these things is the love-act and its pledge ;
For we must set in words the mystery without claptrap,
Experience so light-hearted appears transitory.

In *Kitty Stobling* the last two lines run,

For we must record love's mystery without claptrap,
Snatch out of time the passionate transitory.

The first emendation is acceptable, the second disastrous. For a rediscovered truth—that experience *appears* transitory to the outgoing heart—is substituted the cliché of art eternizing the moment. But even in its new version the sonnet is not alone masterly in its control of speech-rhythms, but most moving as a declaration of faith in life.

There are others in this book :

Gather the bits of road that were
Not gravel to the traveller
But eternal lanes of joy
On which no man who walks can die.
Bring in the particular trees
That caught you in their mysteries,
And love again the weeds that grew
Somewhere specially for you.
Collect the river and the stream
That flashed upon a pensive theme,
And a positive world make,
A world man's world cannot shake,
And do not lose love's resolution
Though face to face with destitution.
(' Prelude ')

Love is the theme of this book ultimately, love for life as it is, not as it might have been, or ought to be, or might well be in the near future. And how many fruitful statements Mr Kavanagh makes in naming his great discovery :

To look on is enough
In the business of love
(' Is ')

Again,

I will have love, have love
From anything made of
And life with a shapely form
With gaiety and charm
And capable of receiving
With grace the grace of living
And wild moments too
Self when freed from you.
(' The Self-slaved ')

Kitty Stobling contains several botched poems—'In Memory of My Mother' collapses one word from the end—but as a whole it stands out as that rarest of achievements, a book of verse which manifestly indicates an integrated personality, rather than an album of shots from various angles. This is Kavanagh, nor are we out of him.

As against this, there are some suggestions that Mr Kavanagh has not yet expunged from his thinking and his writing certain gritty elements. I am *not* thinking of the enchanting 'House Party to Celebrate the Destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland', a lampoon in the grand style rising to the final searing indictment of pinchbeck liberalism :

> In far off parishes of Cork and Kerry
> Old priests walked homeless in the winter air
> As Seamus poured another pale dry sherry.

What I have called the 'gritty elements' in the poet's thinking are best seen at their clogging process, whenever he writes about his vision of the Eternal Feminine. I'm afraid that Mr Kavanagh collapses irremediably into sentimentality when he proclaims his image of woman as warm, intuitive, uncomplicated, comprehensive of the poet, as distinct from calculating, shallow man. The image is as valid potentially as any other, but he has not as yet succeeded in presenting it satisfactorily. It is seen at its lachrymose worst in a poem not reprinted in the new book, 'God in Woman' :

> While men the poet's tragic light resented,
> The spirit that is woman caressed his soul.

It mars an already uneasily poised poem, 'Intimate Parnassus' :

> It is not cold on the mountain, human women
> Fall like ripe fruit, while mere men
> Are climbing out on dangerous branches
> Of banking, insurance and shops ; . . .

The convenient, over-cosy dichotomy suggests a temperamental fixation, the kind of fixation which makes for bad verse unless chastened by the discipline of self-knowledge. This dichotomy may be seen in a less explicit form in 'If Ever You Go To Dublin Town' an inferior ballad in which Mr Kavanagh refurbishes an old fustian icon of the poet as solitary, eccentric, head-in-the-air, but withal tenderhearted :

> He had the knack of making men feel
> As small as they really were
> Which meant as great as God had made them
> But as males they disliked his air.

Why male, wherefore base ? This kind of implied dogma is of course one of the varieties of sentimentality and such a disrupter of poetry.

I will just touch on another variety of sentimentality to which Mr Kavanagh is prone, a kind which might be traced to one of his chief strengths, the re-burnishing of the banal.

The sonnet ' Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal, Dublin ' is a beautifully spikey tribute to his ravishment by the ordinary—until the last two lines :

> O commemorate me with no hero-courageous
> Tomb—just a canal-bank seat for the passer-by.

There is here, I submit, a double failure of language and feeling. That infernal word ' just ' cheapens the poet's wish into a wheedling petition—' just ' a song at twilight or a penny for a poor blind man. But it is the ' passer-by ' that does the real harm. Between the poet and the object-experience falls the shadow of a cliché sentiment, posthumous contact with the undying generations. Yet, apart from the exigencies of rhyme, it is fairly obvious that Mr Kavanagh was aiming at no more than the kind of tentacular simplicity he achieves through ' naming ' objects ; but to adapt from the book's title poem, he is here ceasing to be ' namer ' and becoming ' the beloved '.

Mr Kavanagh's defects are grave. A catalogue of them would include over-reliance on portentous abstractions, the mandarin platitude (see for both, ' The One '), an uneasy acquaintance with Greek mythology (he must never again mention Parnassus, in any form), and a habit of trailing his coat unnecessarily—this mars the sonnet ' Dear Folks ' (' the laughter-smothered courage,/The Poet's '). But for me the defects are often in themselves contributory to the success of individual poems, breaking up the light and refracting it. And he can make high capital out of jagged verbal effects, out of a kind of shrewd and tender clumsiness :

> Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal
> Pouring redemption for me, that I do
> The Will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal,
> Grow with nature again as before I grew.

and again :

> The gravel in the yard was pensive annoyed to be crunched
> As people with problems in their faces drove in in cars
> Yet I with such solemnity around me refused to be bunched
> In fact was inclined to give the go-by to bars.

Mr Kavanagh now speaks in a manner that leads us to await, constantly, surprises of language and rhythm, and no-one with an ear for rhyme can fail to be enchanted by his skill in breaking down cliché associations. In fact he is a major craftsman in words. As for his substantive values, it is sufficient for the time being to recognize that he is, first and foremost, a celebrant of life.

* * * * *

Strictly speaking, a man has to be dead before we can detect a pattern, or pronounce a chaos in his life. Rimbaud stopped writing before he was twenty but he did not, in the context of meaningful pattern, waste the long years in Abyssinia nor, humanly speaking, did he fail to triumph by that squalid death in Marseilles. A poet, or any imaginative writer of quality, is the sum of speech and silence, of fruitfulness and waste, of integrity and cowardice.

But their interim patterns may be established, and with the groping prescience of the natural artist, Mr Kavanagh has so ordered his life that at least one pattern may be detected : not dissimilar, in terms of the imaginative life, from that recorded by Wordsworth in his great Ode on ' Intimations of Immortality '. The pattern is roughly one of departure, disillusion and bewilderment, enrichment and return. So the Green Fool set out, with his faggot of useful memories, burnt them up, wandered in the wilderness, and found them again, marvellously restored. Yet being no longer a Fool, being in fact a Poet, a maker, he saw that they were not necessarily good in themselves, but only in so far as he loved, or might love them with intensity.

Come Dance With Kitty Stobling is the first full report of the illumined return. It remains, of course, to be seen whether the return ends up, finally, in a *cul-de-sac* of reiteration, or whether Mr Kavanagh will employ his dazzling new skills in the wider exploration of his, so far, very moving affair with life. He has many years yet in which to get a prize herd to the affair—one envisages, for instance a long poem in praise of life and love and Creation equivalent in weight to, but denser in texture, than the centre-piece of his early period, The Great Hunger, He might yet be the first poet to come out of Ireland with great love from little room. On the evidence of *Kitty Stobling* he has never before had such an abundance of vitality and purpose. We could be doing with such a poet.

Around and About Swift

by JOHN B. MORRALL

A GLANCE at the mass of books and articles published on Jonathan Swift's life[1] and works during the two centuries since his death is an extremely daunting experience and it seems likely that only a hardened C.I.D. or Scotland Yard man would be successful in keeping his head when facing the forest of problems surrounding Swift's personality and life, particularly his relationship with those much-written-to ladies, Stella and Vanessa.

Most of Swift's biographers have been at a loss to explain why his dealings with these ladies were so enigmatic and even sometimes cruel by normally accepted standards. Some modern authors[2] have been driven to suppose that a profound psychological flaw marked Swift's character, turning normal instincts into the characteristic mixture of fascinated disgust with the human body and all its functions which is so noticeable in many of his works, even in a masterpiece like *Gulliver*. Others, of whom Professor Denis Johnston is the latest example, prefer to argue that there were substantial objective, though hidden, reasons for Swift's peculiar outlook and behaviour and that it is the business of the critic of Swift to ferret them out.

The known facts, such as they are, about Swift's friendship with each of these ladies may be briefly recalled before Professor Johnston's interpretation is examined. Swift first met Stella (Esther Johnson) during his residence at Sir William Temple's establishment at Moor Park in the 1690s. The girl, fourteen years Swift's junior, was allegedly the fruit of the marriage of a domestic servant of Sir William with a certain Edward Johnson. Swift's attachment to Stella as her guide, philosopher and friend, if no more, is one of the incontestable facts about his life and it was to be uninterrupted until her death in 1728.

Vanessa (Esther Vanhomrigh), of Dutch extraction and Dublin-born, did not meet Swift until his periods of residence in London in the later years of Queen Anne's reign as Tory propagandist and pamphleteer[3]. The friendship which resulted certainly seems on Vanessa's side to have developed into real sexual passion, but how far Swift encouraged or at any time shared in this is still a matter for fierce debate. He was

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[1] The two books reviewed in this article are :
In Search of Swift. By Denis Johnston. Dublin : Hodges Figgis. 1959. pp. xii, 240. No price stated.
The Dean and the Anarchist. By James A. Preu. Tallahassee : Florida State University. 1959. pp. 124. $3.00.

[2] A good recent example is Evelyn Hardy, *The Conjured Spirit, Swift : a study in the relationship of Swift, Stella and Vanessa*. London, 1949.

[3] A good account of Swift's public activity during this period will be found in Ricardo Quintana, *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (2nd edition), London, 1953, pp. 175–202.

certainly not very pleased by Vanessa's decision to follow him to Ireland in 1714 after his appointment the previous year as Dean of St. Patrick's (Stella had been resident in Ireland since 1701, having been left some property in County Wicklow by the will of Sir William Temple). And so events moved towards the tragic *dénouement* of Vanessa's disillusion, final quarrel with Swift and death at Celbridge in 1723.

There is no doubt that from the standpoint of modern codes of respectable gentlemanly behaviour Swift behaved badly to both these ladies—that is, unless there was some deeper explanation for his attitude which he was unable or unwilling to reveal. Professor Johnston's contention[1] is that such an explanation does exist and that in fact Swift and Stella were related to each other as uncle and niece, both being illegitimate offshoots of the Temple family, Stella by Sir William himself and Swift by Sir William's father, Sir John Temple, who at the time of Swift's birth was Master of the Rolls in Ireland. *In Search of Swift* purports to bring detailed documentary evidence to support this thesis.

Professor Johnston's book, written in a clear manner and in agreeably polemical (though unnecessarily anti-clerical) style, merits detailed reading for its own sake. Even if the reader finally disagrees with the writer's conclusions he will have to admit that as a piece of scholarly detective work this book must be given very high marks. The realism with which the author faces every aspect of the problem is refreshing after the maudlin sentimentality or evasion of the issues which characterize some of the other authorities. Johnston is surely performing a valuable service when he refuses to be browbeaten by any secondary source, however venerable, and insists rather on going back to a re-examination of the relevant primary sources themselves.

The most important of these primary sources for the question of Swift's parentage and birth are the records of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Black Book of the King's Inns, Dublin. The *Autobiographical Fragment* preserved in Trinity Library gives Swift's own account (written *c.* 1728) of the almost Gilbertian circumstances of his earliest years, including his peculiar abduction by his Irish nurse to Whitehaven in Cumberland, where he tells us that his mother allowed him to remain for several years. Professor Johnston argues that certain ambiguities and palpable misstatements in this document point to the likelihood that Swift was deliberately setting out to hoodwink future readers in order to obscure the real story.[2]

What then was the real story, according to Mr Johnston ? His main clue is found in the King's Inns Black Book. The Dean's putative father, Jonathan Swift the elder, was a kind of assistant at the Inns

[1] Made in a more summary form in 1941 in ' The mysterious origin of Dean Swift ', *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. iii, no. 4.

[2] Playacting on Swift's part is not inconceivable. The thoroughness, amounting to genius, with which he was able to assume the roles of his various literary narrating *personae* has been recently shown in detail by W. B. Ewald, Jr., *The Masks of Jonathan Swift*, Oxford, 1954.

from 1663 until 1666 and then officiated as Steward of the Inns until his death (usually thought to have been in the March of 1667). Johnston states that the last entry in Steward Jonathan's hand is on November 16, 1666, and contends that subsequent entries for that winter were written up in the following year by Stephen Pilkington, the next Steward. The presumption would then seem to be that Swift senior was not carrying out his duties during the winter concerned. Professor Johnston argues that he was in fact dead at some time between November 16 and January 23 ; the latter date is arrived at by a process of reasoning which challenges the present reading of the date of the next set of minutes in the Black Book. Johnston argues that, as these minutes occur immediately after accounts for the Hilary legal term of 1667, it is logical to suppose that the minutes themselves relate to the Hilary term also. A photograph of the relevant page of minutes is supplied by Mr Johnston, who contends that the original date entry of 3 June has been altered to give *post factum* documentary legitimation to proceedings which actually took place in January but which Pilkington did not in fact enter up in the Book until June. The busybody who tried to put the record right only made confusion worse confounded as he altered the dating to 13 January, an impossible date for a meeting, as it was outside legal termtime and on a Sunday anyway. On the supposition that the digit 3 in the number embodies a true recollection of the actual date Professor Johnston plumps for 23 January as the date of this first meeting of the Bench of the Inns for which Steward Swift did not keep a record. It might be supposed that death might not be the only reason to account for a man missing a meeting of a society of which he was secretary ; but Professor Johnston will have none of such arguments. The suggestion that a lingering and incapacitating illness of the Steward might have been the cause of his absence is dismissed on the ground that all surviving evidence speaks of his death as being a sudden one.

Another Black Book entry on which Denis Johnston lays much stress is that of 15 April 1667. On this date Abigail Swift, the Steward's widow, petitioned the Bench of the Inns to give her legal agent, her brother-in-law William Swift (an Irish Attorney who had trained at Gray's Inn, London), official authorization to collect on her behalf debts and dues owing to the late Steward by members of the society and which were now an obligation on the estate of the dead man. Some attempt at previous collection of some of the dues is apparently presupposed and Mr Johnston argues that it is inconceivable that this attempt as well as the drafting and presentation of the petition could have been done within a month of Jonathan Swift senior's death. Yet this is what we should have to suppose if we adhere to the traditional March date of the decease of the Steward.

All the pieces of evidence in the Black Book, Johnston concludes, prove that the Steward must have died some time between 16 November,

1666, and 23 January, 1667. Therefore he could not, on the most charitable reckoning, have been the begetter of the future Dean, whose date of birth was 30 November, 1667. Let us sum up Mr Johnston's conclusion in his own words: '—the elder Jonathan was well and truly dead before the conception of the future Dean, and—this fact is at the back of all the dissimulation and contradictions that infect everything that we are told about his birth and background. That is why he was promptly shipped out of the country soon after he was born. This is how this cuckoo of incomparable brilliance appeared so strangely in a nest of Swifts.'[1] Later in the book Sir John Temple is pinned down as the real father of the famous satirist and the fact that the Temples had Irish property is linked up with the statement in the Trinity College record of Swift's admission as an undergraduate in 1682 that he was born in the County of Dublin. Another John Temple, Sir William's son, did in fact possess a house at Palmerston, County Dublin. Mr Johnston suggests that this, and not the traditional city 'birthplace' in Hoey's Court, was where Swift first actually saw the light.

The extended discussion of Swift's parentage is a fair specimen of Mr Johnston's methods of investigating and interpreting his sources. Even from the above brief summary it will be clear that the crux of his argument rests on the material in the Black Book ; the other testimonies cited are in the nature of subsidiary corroborative evidence. It is unfortunate for the theory that Professor Johnston's deductions from the January/June entry do not seem to be completely conclusive. It might just as well be maintained that the proceedings minuted in the Black Book did really take place in June and that the attempt (if it be an attempt) to change the date to January was mere guesswork. At any rate the alteration and 'the absence of any clerical work whatever at the Inns during the Hilary Term of 1667'[2] are not by themselves sufficient proof that the Steward of the Inns was dead before the opening of the term. On the contrary the gap is more explicable on the assumption that the Steward was not dead but prevented by some temporary reason such as sickness from carrying out his duties. It seems unlikely that if Swift senior had been publicly known to be 'well and truly dead' before the start of the Hilary term the authorities of the Inns would have delayed until the end of that term before appointing a successor.

The argument based on Abigail Swift's April petition seems equally inconclusive. Abigail Swift and her brother-in-law may have realized quite quickly that it was impossible to collect arrears due to the late Steward without official authorization from the Inns. Hence it is not as absurd as Mr Johnston thinks to imagine that the April petition may well have been drafted within a month of Jonathan senior's death. It seems then that a verdict of 'not proven' must be returned to Mr

[1] *In search of Swift*, p. 72.
[2] Ibid., p. 56.

Johnston's two major pieces of evidence purporting to prove that Swift was a bastard.

His evidence that Stella was also illegitimate is rather more plausible. The idea that she was Sir William Temple's daughter was mentioned as early as 1723 by Bishop Evans of Meath (though on anything connected with Swift's affairs the evidence of this prelate, one of the Dean's most bitter ecclesiastical opponents, must be suspect). Swift's earliest eighteenth century biographers, Lord Orrery and Dr Delany, both discuss the rumour, Orrery rejecting its authenticity, Delany appearing to accept it. The controversial *Gentleman's Magazine* article of 1757 declared that Swift and Stella were half-brother and sister and that this was why they did not marry. Professor Johnston thus follows on well-trodden ground, but his statement of the case for Stella's illegitimacy is as comprehensive as one is likely to get on the present evidence or lack of it. The life and death of Johnson, Stella's putative father, are indeed wrapped in suspicious obscurity, while Temple's settlement of valuable Irish property on a girl whose mother was one of his family's domestics is certainly rather curious. On the second point, however, Middleton Murry has already put forward an alternative explanation based on the fact that Temple had lost his own little daughter Diana in 1684 and may have adopted Stella as a substitute.[1]

Mr Johnston's general reconstruction of the mystery of Swift's personal life may be summarized as follows: At an early date, probably before Sir William Temple's death, Swift became aware of his relationship to Stella. Stella was in fact entrusted to his care by his half-brother, Sir William ; this accounts for Swift's encouragement to Stella to settle in Ireland. Later he met Vanessa, with whom he fell in love (Professor Johnston thinks it likely that she became his mistress) and whom he wished to marry. But if he married her he would appear to the world outside to be abandoning Stella, with whom his name was already inseparably linked. Stella herself now came into possession of the story and would have been willing to place no obstacle to his union with Vanessa, provided the whole truth were told. Swift however felt unable to do this, as the revelation would have meant disgrace for the names of Sir John and Sir William Temple, his own mother and Stella herself. Furthermore there was a real danger of criminal proceedings if any suspicion of incest were incurred. So Swift had to jilt Vanessa without giving that unfortunate lady any adequate explanation. The insoluble triangle in which Swift felt that he had been involved by the past indiscretions of others left in his mind a permanent embitterment towards anything relating to human love.

This solution put forward by Professor Johnston is itself melodramatic enough but, apart from the difficulty of providing in its support evidence which would be really conclusive, one cannot help

[1] John Middleton Murry, *Jonathan Swift : a critical biography*, London, 1954, p. 23.

feeling that it does not altogether explain the peculiarly eccentric intensity of Swift's art. Johnston appears to argue that Swift was a normal man involved in an unfortunate combination of abnormal circumstances which would be sufficient explanation for his embittered pessimism. But Swift's psychological eccentricity as revealed in his writings goes far beyond mere pessimism. Even in his earlier works, such as the *Tale of a Tub*, written long before the Stella-Vanessa problem had arisen, we find strong traces of the combined disgust and relish for obscenity and scatology which is an unattractive feature of Swift's art. There must in fact have been some inherent and early psychological split in Swift's personality which would have bedevilled his relations with Stella and Vanessa even without the complications envisaged by Mr Johnston. It is likely that the emphasis on dispassionate reason as the guide to thought and conduct which is the official attitude of Swift as a positive philosopher should be seen as a desperate counter-attack against abnormally irrational elements present in his own personality.

Yet as a public figure it was Swift the rationalist who mattered, and all our modern interest in the enigma of his personality should not blind us to the fact, paradoxical though it may seem, that it was as the prophet of undiluted reason that Swift influenced his own and subsequent generations. In many ways it is a relief to turn from Professor Johnston's tangled biographical thickets to Professor James A. Preu's straightforward little book, *The Dean and the Anarchist*, which discusses the impact of Swift as a thinker on William Godwin, Shelley's father-in-law and the originator, as is usually thought, of modern political Anarchism. Swift is not usually considered to be in the front rank of political thinkers, but Godwin had no hesitation in placing the lessons of political wisdom provided by *Gulliver's Travels* above those coming from Plato and Aristotle or indeed most other previous writers on the subject. The cutting remarks of the King of Brobdingnag about the human race worried Godwin for most of his life, though it was not until the 1830s that he felt bold enough to attempt a reasoned refutation of his Majesty's opinion ; this seems to be the only instance on record in which Godwin showed any respect for monarchy.

Can we dismiss this whole episode in the history of ideas as unimportant by maintaining that there is nothing more to it than a ridiculous mistake by Godwin in taking *Gulliver's Travels* too literally ? It is admittedly true that Godwin was deficient in a sense of humour,[1] but at the same time his use of Swift's political ideas in constructing his own system in *Political Justice* repays serious attention and Professor

[1] Though his only recorded joke is rather a good one. He once described Robert Sandeman, to whose extreme version of Calvinism he had at one time subscribed, as 'a celebrated north-country apostle who, after Calvin had damned ninety-nine in a hundred of mankind, has contrived a scheme for damning ninety-nine in a hundred of the followers of Calvin' (Preu, p. 16).

Preu performs a useful service by analysing it in detail. 'This book of inestimable wisdom,' as Godwin called *Gulliver*, was not the only one of Swift's works to be utilized by the Anarchist thinker. All Swift's major writings and some of his minor ones were laid under contribution.

Godwin's own theory is an interesting combination of communal utilitarianism with individualist independence. For him Man was capable of infinite earthly perfectibility once reason by patient exposition had asserted its sway over the passions. This growth of reason's empire, Godwin admitted, would be a slow process, for it was illegitimate to use coercion on reason's behalf; to do so would be to violate Godwin's second social canon—the right of the individual conscience to make its own unhampered decisions. The question of property illustrates Godwin's ambivalent outlook. Strictly speaking, no man has an absolute right to possess property. The individual holds property in trust for the common good and should therefore make use of it for that purpose: 'Not a talent do we possess, not a moment of time, not a shilling of property, for which we are not responsible at the tribunal of the public, which we are not obliged to pay into the general bank of common advantage'.[1] But this does not mean that any other authority, public or private, has the right to force an individual to make proper use of the goods which he holds in trust; his choice to do his duty must be absolutely free and unconstrained.

There is no doubt that Swift would have regarded this theory of Godwin's as impractical humbug. And yet there was much in Swift's outlook which Godwin could use to buttress his own position. Though officially, as an Anglican Tory, an upholder of a conservative principle of hierarchy in the ordering of human society, Swift's practical attitude towards concrete embodiments of this hierarchy was often critical, if not contemptuous. Monarchs, statesmen, lawyers, soldiers, churchmen, all the leaders of society came under Swift's bitter lash, while in the Houyhnhnms he invented a society in which government was made unnecessary because human reason functioned perfectly. How far Swift was approving or satirizing the life of pure reason in the portrait of his thoroughly reasonable but completely unemotional horses is still debated.[2] What interests us here is that Godwin would find in this section of *Gulliver* ample material to encourage his own belief that Swift was the John the Baptist of Godwin's own Anarchistic theories.

Swift and Godwin were both in a sense equalitarians, Godwin without qualification, Swift in considering Man as he would be if reason enjoyed undisputed sway. Both hated any kind of emotional or social manipulation which would come between individual reason and its apprehension of moral duty. Swift was of course a true classicist in his

[1] William Godwin, *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, edited by F. E. L. Priestley, 3 vols., Toronto, 1946. II, p. 57.

[2] For the statement of the view that Swift intended to show the limitations of pure reason see Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The Personality of Jonathan Swift*, London, 1958, pp. 99–109.

abhorrence of ' enthusiasm ',[1] while Godwin had more of eighteenth century sobriety in him than might be expected from one who ended up as elder statesman to a group of Romantic poets. Both in principle hated the party system in politics, maintaining that it was an interference with the right of the individual to make up his own mind.[2] Both were against violent revolution as a means for the improvement of society. Both campaigned against the evils of war, though neither was an outright pacifist.

In a few respects Godwin had to part company. On the issue of free speech he stood for unrestricted liberty, while Swift, through his King of Brobdingnag (who, as we have already seen, had for another reason shocked Godwin), argued that, even if the individual had the right to socially undesirable opinions, he had no right to propagate them : ' —a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials '[3]. Swift's position here is remarkably similar to that of another great English portrayer of an imaginary society based entirely on reason—St. Thomas More.

Godwin seems to have stood alone in his generation in his veneration for Swift, based though it may have been on a distorted perception of Swift's meanings. The Romantic and Victorian periods were not attuned to sympathetic interest in the works of the Irish Dean. Swift's realism did not appeal to the sentimental idealism of much of nineteenth century opinion, while his congenital pessimism did not endear him to reformers and ' progressives '. Only in the present century though in an atmosphere dominated by all the things Swift most detested (anti-rational interpretations of life, fanatical brands of social and political ' enthusiasm ', the fantastic expansion of pragmatic experimental science) has Swift's stock risen. It is as if the twentieth century, aware of its own apparently insoluble tensions, had learnt to look with more sympathy on the contradictions in this most irrational of all defenders of reason.

This tribute paid by our own mechanistic Laputa of an age to the great satirist would have tickled his ironical sense, but it would also surely have flattered him. For, whatever the mystery of his own private life and conduct, as a public figure Swift fought for no ignoble ideal. Though he may have found himself unable to control his dislike for Tom, Dick and Harry, it was nevertheless to the individual common sense of the ordinary man that this extraordinary eccentric set out to appeal.

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[1] On Swift as an example of the neo-classicism of ' the Age of Reason ' see Quintana, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–69.

[2] Swift's practice in this respect did not live up to his precept.

[3] *Gulliver's Travels*, Part II, Chap. vi. (*Swift : Gulliver's Travels and selected writings in prose and verse*, edited by John Hayward, London and New York, 1946. p. 128).

The Social Philosophy of Charlie Chaplin

by NEIL HURLEY

FOR over fifty years Charlie Chaplin has entertained audiences the world over. If any one person has dominated the film industry by the scope of his creative genius, it has been Chaplin. He has been among the first in the movie world to realize the power of the screen as an instrument for education, art, and entertainment. Where others have sought by means of the word, spoken or written, to promote social justice and a better understanding of personal human dignity, Chaplin succeeded in spreading his social gospel by his pantomime. Not using language nor written sub-titles, Chaplin made the world familiar with his famous ' little tramp ' and through him with values of unquestionable humanistic stamp.

Chaplin has been a 'stormy petrel' in the United States. M.G.M.'s motto—*ars artis gratia*—has never been his guiding star since his art has always been identified with a message of intense personal flavour and conviction. He is a many-sided genius ; any man would have to be who could write his own movie scenarios and plots, compose music and ballets, act and mimic, produce and direct, and unearth and develop latent acting talents.[1] Since each Chaplin picture is uniquely the product of his genius and since Chaplin is a man of pronounced views, his following is sharply divided. Those who agree with him idolize him ; those who disagree with him, loathe him. In France he is universally loved ; in the U.S.A. he is definitely a *persona non grata.* Prescinding from the personal views people may entertain of Chaplin it cannot be denied that he has exercised, and will continue to do so as long as his films are shown, a vast influence on the social thinking of men.[2]

We cannot fully understand Chaplin and his social views of life unless we take cognizance of his sensitive and temperamental character,

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[1] Chaplain's practice of using fresh talent has resulted in careers for such stars as Edna Purviance, Jackie Coogan, Paulette Goddard. In his latest film, *A King in New York* Chaplin has even given a significant role to his young son, Michael.

[2] For those interested in Chaplin's work and importance, the definitive study of his life is Pierre Le Prohon. *Charles Chaplin.* Paris : Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1957. pp. 450

his early life and its rôle in shaping his social consciousness, his Jewish heritage and its influence on his almost messianic mission, his artistic virtuosity and his ability to convey universal truths and reactions by common everyday scenes from life. Since he is at once artist, prophet and social critic, it is necessary to examine the genesis of his art and message as well as the temper of the times in which he has practised his calling.

The psychological proverb that the child is father to the man is notably discernible in the career of Chaplin. Both parents were entertainers: his mother, a Jewess, was a dancer, and his father, who died while Charlie was quite young, was a music-hall artist. Born in the poverty-stricken Kennington district in London in 1888, Chaplin learned to eat of the bitter fruit of deprivation and hardship, a taste which never left him. According to his own confession no amount of prosperity would ever efface the boyhood fear he had of the impending hunger each new dawn brought. He said : ' I am like a man who is ever haunted by a spirit, the spirit of poverty, the spirit of privation.'[1]

Chaplin made his theatrical debut at the age of six. The depressing milieu, so characteristic of a Dickens novel, had certain advantages for the budding mimic ; everywhere characters and types abounded : the tavern-keeper, the London bobbies, the blind violinist, the costermonger, the wealthy matrons, the inhabitants of the demi-monde, the exacting landlord. Everywhere were the haves and the have-nots to be seen and the impressionable young Chaplin smouldered with a longing for protest and expression. There is little doubt but that these many years with Dame Poverty were to hold the future in fee.

Lifting his characterizations from the canvas of life, Chaplin imitated nature without attempting to overstep her limits. With instinctive infallibility and lightning flashes of intuition (he once said : ' I see everything in ten seconds or I don't see it at all') he evolved a complete repertoire of routines based on song and dance, imitations and pantomime. The keen competition he faced, the need to win customer approval in an allotted eight minute skit, the threat of hunger which failure brought, all cooperated to bring Chaplin's talents to rapid bloom.

Chaplin's themes were always human themes with profound implications. He sensed that comedy is, in some ways, more subtle than drama in that it seeks to touch the depth of the human spirit and not merely that emotion we ordinarily associate with the human heart. He grasped Henri Bergson's principle that *le rire s'adresse a l'intelligence pure.* Avoiding banalities and low comedy, Chaplin developed a visual comedy rooted in facial expressions, human reactions and situational poses. Though he later perfected his art of mimicry by studying the Japanese, Chaplin

[1] Cited in René Jeanne and Charles Ford. *Histoire du Cinema Americain.* Volume III. *Histoire Encyclopedique du Cinema.* 1895–1945. Paris : Robert LaFont, p. 248.

attributed his miming powers to the influence of his mother who would stand by the window and enact what she saw in the street. With the gift of pantomime Chaplin was to re-capture the pristine unity of pre-Babel times. ' And the earth was of one tongue, and of the same speech '. (Genesis, 11:1).

Chaplin's career in England ended with his work for Fred Karno in his London studio ; in 1913 he began his long American career (to last 34 years) by working with the famed Mack Sennett at the Keystone studio. From 1914 to 1936, through his years of activity at Keystone, Essanay, Mutual and United Artists, Chaplin performed the amazing feat of producing picture after picture without the usual metamorphosis of character which is common to movie production.[1] To mention Chaplin's name is to bring to mind the character he made famous—the comic tramp who satirized pre-World War I London by the very clothes he wore : the under-sized derby, the shoes with up-turned toes, the cane, cravat, and the rose in the lapel. The character alone exuded pathos and humour ; for more than twenty years Charlie moved audiences to tears and to laughter. Charlie would milk a cow by using the tail as a pump-handle, he would be found sleeping under the canvas as the city officials unveiled the new statue in the square, he would extract a butt from a sardine can with all the grace of a millionaire opening his gilt cigarette case, he would disassemble a watch and then pour the parts into the customer's hat unconcernedly. So unfolded the Chaplinesque world.

However beneath the flow of comic action in the Chaplin films of the silent screen ran a philosophy and a message. Charlie symbolized the man on the margin of society, the man society needed but always overlooked, the ' underdog ', the *déraciné*. Pretty girls reject Charlie, policemen pursue him, polite society scorns him. Millions the world over not only were attracted by this *gauche* character but they felt themselves identified with him. Whatever he undertook to do, failed. He tries to enter a subway only to be carried helplessly along in the opposite direction by the crowd. He tries to open a Murphy bed only to be imprisoned within it. Even nature offers puckish resistance : the water hose drenches him, the wind carries away the music he plays in serenading his lady-love.

But the message throughout all of Chaplin's silent films is one of hope. It is the Shakespearean truth that there is a divinity which shapes our ends rough-hew them how we will. No matter how often society dashes the ' little tramp's ' hopes to pieces, he shrugs his shoulders resignedly and wanders off to begin life anew. Some have seen in Charlie a symbol of the wandering Jew, condemned to travel from place

[1] The one exception is Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris* (1925), one of the first, if not the first, psychological films to be produced.

to place without taking root anywhere.[1] Certainly the lesson of detachment from society and individual dignity was forcibly brought home by Chaplin in pictures such as *The Kid*, *The Circus*, *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights*.

From the first appearance of the whimsical vagabond in 1914 it was obvious that Charlie the tramp was a witness, albeit a silent one. His mute appeal attacked humanity and society at those points where it seemed most secure, namely in its pride and pomp. Like a child pricking a toy balloon, Charlie deflated the reasonable world about him, taking immense pleasure in its collapse. In *City Lights*, for example, we see him swallow a whistle with the disastrous consequences that upon entering a fashionable salon his every breath produces an involuntary whistle. This scene, typical of so many other Chaplin films, served to detonate the very structure of conventional society amid an explosion of laughter. Though never taking himself or society seriously, the ' little tramp ' of Chaplin's silent period (1914–1932) is a highly sensitive creature whose wounded feelings are capable of evoking great pity. Nor does the movie-goer ever cease admiring the dignified manner in which he bears life's bruises. He showed in unforgettable scenes that the dignity of the ' common man ' was greater than wealth, social status, industrial society or any collectivism. With boundless powers of recovery he meets the adversities which society places in his path in order to ' cabin and confine ' him within its arbitrary rules of etiquette and its superficial, if not hypocritical, posturings. Chaplin used his miming powers to great effect; he could distil in his face all the pain and inconsiderateness of man's inhumanity to man. Witness the recognition scene in *City Lights* where the flower girl, her sight now restored, discovers by her sensitive sense of touch that the miserable tramp before her is the benefactor whom she took earlier to be a millionaire. So poignant is the distress on Charlie's countenance at being discovered that the scene becomes intolerable to the point of pain.

In Charlie bedrock humanity found a spokesman and the ' underdog ' an advocate who could plead his cause eloquently. The best evidence of how successful Chaplin wedded the one and the many (i.e. by concentrating the universal aspirations and emotions of mankind in one concrete character) was the names which cropped up in each nation for the pathetic nomad. The French, Italians and Spaniards baptized him anew : Charlot, Carlino, Carlos and Carlitos. When one considers the times in which Chaplin's celluloid puppet performed before the world, the universal appeal of Charlie becomes understandable. The generations of the World War I period felt the discipline of conscription

[1] We will cite only two such references : *Dans l'errance eternelle de Charlot, à n'en pas douter, il y a la composante juive.* Maurice Pontet, 'La Signfication Humaine de l'Oeuvre de Charlie Chaplin ', *Études*, Tome 282 (Septembre, 1954), p. 254. Also : *Le paralléle n'est-il pas saissant entre le sort du héros de ' Le ruée vers l'or, et celui de Juif déraciné, errant au milieu des nations qui le méprisent et le rejettent ?* Jean Yvoire, " La Ruée Vers L'Or," *Téléciné*, Juin 1956, p. 5.

and military regimentation ; those of the ' roaring twenties ' knew the giddiness of prosperity and the sharp social inequalities which attend the appearance of a *nouveau riche* class ; the generation of the early thirties felt the pinch of world-wide depression and a few years later the uneasiness of the spread of totalitarian governments.

Chaplin seized upon the socio-economic vicissitudes of the times to colour his message. We have already indicated that the art of Chaplin cannot be divorced from his social gospel, that is, from his comments on society and international happenings. The gospel of Chaplin as preached by Charlie was quite discreet and subdued in his silent period of film construction. It was not till *The Great Dictator* (1940) that Chaplin became more vigorous in his commentary on society to the point of adopting the rôle of an Old Testament prophet. In the period from 1914 to 1932 Chaplin contented himself rather with giving expression to the disappointments and fears of the ' common man ' and providing him not only with cathartic release but with a message of hope.

Thus for the World War I generation Chaplin produced *Shoulder Arms*, in which he played a buck private, a re-incarnation of Kipling's Tommy Atkins or a latter day Private Hargrove. Millions recognized themselves and the truth which the film conveyed. Charlie was the human cipher in the world of things military. When mail call comes, for example, his gleeful anticipation slowly melts to sharp disappointment as he discovers that there is no mail for him. However he sees a comrade reading a letter and, peering over his shoulder, identifies himself with the joy of his comrade. The impact of the scene lay primarily in its simplicity and its freedom from self-pity and resentment. In such scenes Charlie taught his audience the lesson of human character and how a magnanimous soul confronts disappointment.

All through the 1920's Chaplin held the mirror up to nature, showing to the world that nature heals all wounds, that spring follows winter and that life is bitter-sweet. His pictures were a sharp contrast to the average Hollywood film of the twenties which capitalized on lust, violence and slap-stick. Chaplin preached at this time the glories of independence and detachment which the poor man enjoyed, but he never failed to bring home the lesson of what such a man must suffer. When Charlie lost the girl to a rich rival, he would have the audience believe by his capers that the wound was slight ; however it was obvious that the melancholy of the sad clown would not soon disappear. Such a scene, full of the *lachrymae rerum*, appears in *The Vagabond*. Another occurs in *The Circus* where audiences went away feeling that gaiety could mask sadness and that crowds harboured many lonely people.

When Chaplin allows his tramp the companionship of another person and the luxury of some affection, it is always that of one who has also been caught in the gears of the social machine. The attraction which

the disenchanted of society find in one another is presented in the orphan's gratitude in *The Kid*, in the role of the flower girl in *City Lights*, and that of Paulette Goddard in *Modern Times*. In these three pictures Charlie was the quintessence of *disponsibilité*. There were moments of Franciscan lyricism in these films in which the comic vagrant, freed from material ties, drifted effortlessly through life's troubled waters. He was much like a schooner, all sail, no anchor and with Providence at the helm.

If the hopeful chord is struck again and again, then it is due to the messianic character of Chaplin's films.[1] If there are echoes and re-echoes of the truth that there is Providence in the fall of a sparrow, then it must be sought in the distinctly Hebraic quality of the ' Charlie ' films. Whether one could go so far as to maintain that Charlie is a type of the ' wandering Jew ' is a moot question.[2] It seems fairly certain however that there are Old Testament strains in many of Chaplin's films. As the Jews were never greater than in their moments of exile and weakness so the little vagabond triumphs, almost providentially, in the face of the greatest odds. He surrenders everything to the enemy, save his personal dignity.[3] Even his lack of speech added force to his witness.

There is an unquestionable David-Goliath motif in the Charlie Chaplin films of the silent era. Despite his frail physique, he triumphs over the obese employer, the buxom matron, the brawny gangster. He is a symbol of the spirit opposing matter, the ethereal versus the corporeal. Consider the film *Easy Street*. Out of love for a minister's daughter Charlie becomes a policeman ; not only does he succeed in subduing the powerful law-breaker by asphyxiating him with a gas-burner, but he converts him to honesty. The victory is even more complete than that of David over Goliath for instead of killing the enemy he recruits his allegiance. In *The Pilgrim* Charlie, significantly enough, delivers a moving sermon by enacting in pantomime the battle of David and Goliath. He, a fugitive from prison, finds himself in the pulpit by force of circumstance and manages to surpass in eloquence the efforts of the superiorly trained hypocritical minister. Little David conquers again. In this same film we see too an instance of how Chaplin impressed his audience with the lesson that the arm of Providence is never foreshortened. Escaping from the law Charlie crosses the Mexican border only to meet an oncoming band of hostile bandits. He races back to the border ; the audience senses the dilemma and feels enclosed

[1] ' I do not think Chaplin's philosophy is complicated. It is rather so deeply-felt that it has at times become almost messianic '. Roger Manvell. *The Film and the Public* (A Pelican Book). 1955, p. 165.

[2] Cf. the footnote reference on p. 314.

[3] The parallel of Charlie's personal philosophy is closely akin to that of Mahatma Ghandi's principle of *sayagohara*, i.e. of peaceful resistance.

within the ever-narrowing trap. Once at the border, however, Charlie straddles it, with one foot in Mexico and one foot in the U.S.A., and continues his flight laterally along the boundary line.

The ' little tramp ' always seemed to find a door in the walled-up cubicle of society. Over, under, around or through the set walls of convention which it had erected—the way did not matter, as long as Chaplin made his escape from social restrictions. And having once escaped he beckons the audience to follow him down the rosy dawn of tomorrow. The scene which most typifies the hope Charlie held out to people was the last one in *Modern Times* where Charlie, hand-in-hand with Paulette Goddard, turns his back on mass-production society to disappear down the unending road which leads into the hopeful horizon of the future.

It is in *Modern Times*, *The Great Dictator* and *Monsieur Verdoux* that we see the prophetic quality of Chaplin and his rebellious nature at its apogee. Whereas in *Modern Times* the aesthetic and functional aspects of his art remain in delicate balance, the last two pictures of the trilogy give precedence to the functional. That is to say, that the message predominates over the art. In his anti-totalitarian *The Great Dictator* (the first film without Charlie the tramp since *Woman of Paris* in 1925) Chaplin directs his message upstage and his art downstage when, at the end of the film, he puts aside his characterization to fling blunt questions directly at the audience. To appreciate the mordant nature of *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), one must not lose sight of the stormy weather which Chaplin's personal reputation was undergoing in the U.S.A. Chaplin has ever been critical of American *mores* and folkways ; his refusal to become a naturalized citizen despite over thirty years' residence in America was due to his unwillingness to forego this privilege of criticism. Besides the unfavourable publicity his private life received, Chaplin's Soviet sympathies were aired in a congressional investigation in 1940. The final estrangement of Chaplin from America came in 1947 when the State Department refused him a return visa upon the occasion of his visit to London for the première of *Monsieur Verdoux*.

We cite these facts to help to explain the nihilism of *Monsieur Verdoux*, the most negative film Chaplin has produced to date. In this picture Chaplin plays the part of a man who, forced out of work by an acquisitive, unfeeling social order, turns to supporting his family by marrying and successively murdering a number of rich widows. Monsieur Verdoux is, at bottom, the little tramp come back in disguise to take revenge on those flighty women who would not have him, to take by violence what society in its callousness had denied him, to fight hypocrisy and cunning with its own arms. The tenor of the film is best grasped by Verdoux's own remarks : ' I shall see you all very soon ' (addressed to the court after receiving the death sentence) ; ' one murder makes

a villain, millions a hero', ' I am at peace with God, my conflict is with man ' (to the priest). One critic has aptly described the vitriolic tone of the film : ' This time there is no long road to the horizon, no pretty girl for companion, no pathetic fatalism. It is a stark march to death.[1]

In *Limelight* (1952) we have a film of beauty, of genius and a message of a new dimension. It is as if Chaplin, like the phoenix, were renewed in Verdoux's death. Reflecting Chaplin's own life, the film portrays the renewal of purpose an aged trooper (Calvero) finds in trying to restore confidence in a disillusioned young dancer (Terry). In the dramatic death of Calvero and the prayer to the Unknown God at the moment when the dancer wavers in her performance we have a new element in the prophetic career of Chaplin—the teaching that to lose one's life is really to save it.

Unfortunately Chaplin has not chosen to pursue this new, promising direction in his last film, *A King in New York*. The shades of bitterness and negative witness evident in *Monsieur Verdoux* re-appear in this criticism of American society, its fear of heterodox thinking, its worship of success, its entrapment in mass thinking and chaotic forms of recreation. The theme of the ' wandering Jew ' is again discernible : the King of Estrovia finds refuge and popularity in America only to be stigmatized because of his friendship with a small boy who has been investigated by Congress for Communist sympathies. Once again Chaplin makes society the villain of his story as he portrays the plight of the non-conformist. *A King in New York* is the Old Testament theme he has used before : Chaplin as a modern Osee or Jeremias calling society, in this case that of America, to repentance.

Living to-day in exile in Switzerland, Chaplin reminds us of another twentieth-century artist, James Joyce, whose credo aptly fits the career of Chaplin : ' I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use, silence, exile and cunning '.[2] A child of poverty with a Hebraic sense of mission, Chaplin has not only pushed cinematic art to exalted heights but he has given witness to the utopistic hope of a social order in which the individual will not surrender his dignity in the face of wealth, social status, mechanization, totalitarianism or an enervating form of democracy.[3] The ' little tramp ' has been for those condemned to a life of quiet desperation a ' pillar of fire ' in the darkness of industrial society.

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[1] Roger Manvell, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

[2] James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* N.Y. : Signet, p. 194.

[3] Chaplin fought poverty in *City Lights*, greed in *The Gold Rush*, de-personalizing industrialization in *Modern Times*, totalitariansim in *The Great Dictator*, and democratic evils in *A King in New York*.

Book Reviews

APPROACHES TO CHRISTIAN UNITY. Doctrine and Prayer. By C.-J. Dumont, O.P. Translation with an Introduction by Henry St John, O.P. London: Darton, Longman and Todd. 1959. Pp. X + 226. 25s.

PROTESTANTISM. By George H. Tavard. Translated by Rachel Attwater. Faith and Fact Books: 137. London: Burns and Oates. 1959. Pp. 139. 8s. 6d.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. By Charles Couturier, S.J. Translated from the French by A. V. Littledale. London: Darton, Longman and Todd. 1960. Pp. xxii + 146. 10s. 6d.

Les voies de l'unité chrétienne, by the distinguished Catholic ecumenist Fr C.-J. Dumont, O.P., is not a formal essay, either technical or popular, on the subject of Christian unity under any or all of its many aspects. The book lacks the sustained unity and logical development and continuous exposition of the essay. It is rather a collection of short articles which appeared originally as editorials in the monthly bulletin, *Vers l'unité chrétienne*, of the *Centre d'Études 'Istina'* at Paris, and in which Fr Dumont, director of the Centre, gave expression to his ideas and insights on various facets of the Ecumenical Movement and the problem of re-establishing Christian unity. Though occasional in origin and somewhat allusive in style and sometimes overlapping in content and not always fully developed in thought, these editorial articles were well worth collecting in book form. At once profoundly Catholic and highly personal they exploit for their purpose all the Church's liturgical and doctrinal riches, they are packed with the shrewd sympathetic comment of an able theologian and experienced ecumenist, they practise rather than preach the Catholic ecumenical ideal. Grouped under the four headings: Christian Unity in the Liturgical Cycle, Prayer and Work for Unity, The Unity of the Church and Christian Unity, The Theological Virtues and Unity, their message has a clearer ring and a stronger impact. Taken together they give a fine portrayal of the Catholic 'Ecumenical Man' with his distinctive spirituality and theology and cannot but succeed in reproducing his image in the thoughtful reader. The English translation of Fr Dumont's book, though the style in places is rather awkward and unenglish, is a welcome addition to our growing but still very small ecumenical library. *Approaches to Christian Unity*, in particular the first two sections with their liturgical and pastoral emphasis, can be recommended without hesitation to all who wish, especially on occasions such as the Chair of Unity Octave, to give their thoughts and prayer and sermons a ecumenical orientation.

'To help the reader to comprehend the Protestant spirit as it is expressed in its more important manifestations . . . [to present] a general view of Protestant evolution': such is Fr Tavard's aim in the slim but compact volume *Protestantism* which he has recently contributed to the *Faith and Fact* series. It is a bold aim, but the author has at his command all the psychological and

intellectual resources of the convert ecumenist: he writes with sympathy and sensitivity from his own well-informed Protestant and Catholic backgrounds. Fr Tavard's book falls roughly into two parts. The first, which is the shorter, consists of a series of chapters in which the distinctively Protestant insights are presented and evaluated. Not all, whether Protestant or Catholic, will be wholly satisfied here; and in fairness to the uninitiated for whom this book is chiefly intended, it should be noted that some of the interpretations put forward are, in the present state of Reformation studies, open to criticism and do not command any general agreement. The second and longer part is devoted to an able and up-to-date survey of the principal movements (Revivalism, Liberalism, etc.) which have marked the course of Protestant history and still characterize some of its various forms. Anglicanism has a chapter to itself written specially for this English edition. On the whole Fr Tavard's book provides a useful introduction to Protestantism in general, and the English translation, despite a few slips (e.g. p. 10: ' he produced his manifesto ' should surely read ' it produced its manifesto ') is a competent piece of work.

The Mission of the Church deals with the nature and practical consequences of the Church's work of evangelization. The Church exists to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, to incarnate itself in every culture and every race, to win the nations for Christ with all their riches as individuals and as peoples, to enable them to appreciate and to achieve in Christ that elevation and enhancement and ennoblement of their whole being which since Calvary is their destiny and their right. From this it follows that the missionary must not transplant all that he himself happens to be, and that he must preserve in his prospective converts all that is good and compatible with the Faith. In the words of the late Holy Father: ' all that in the customs of the peoples is not indissolubly bound up with religious error must always be studied in a friendly spirit, and, whenever possible, preserved and fostered '. Fr Charles Couturier's treatment of this theme is admirably balanced and highly practical; and he has been well served by his translator. It is a theme which is of considerable interest not only to the missiologist but also to the ecumenist. The principle involved applies not only to Paganism but also to Protestantism, and is rich in promise as a means of advancing the cause of ecclesiastical unity among Christians.

Michael Hurley

THE WORD OF LIFE. Essays on the Bible. Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, Ltd. 1959. Pp. 123. 8s. 6d.

INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee. 1960. Pp. 253. 4.25 dollars.

The biblical movement has gone hand in hand with the liturgical revival on the Continent for several decades now. Faint ripples of interest in the Bible show that Ireland has not remained untouched and may be the forerunners of a more strongly running sea. It is time therefore to look to our barque of biblical knowledge which, to say the least, is sailing light. The Editor of *The Furrow* has provided some useful cargo by running a series of articles on

the Bible during 1957. The series proved sufficiently popular to justify their publication in a single volume under the general title *The Word of Life*. Although this volume is not an introduction to the Bible in the strict sense of the term, it does introduce one to many concepts which are essential for the intelligent reading of the Scriptures.

The book opens with a foreword by the late Monsignor Kissane in which he outlines the progress made by biblical studies in the last fifty years under the guidance and encouragement of the Holy See. While they have helped in the understanding of the Bible, modern discoveries in the Middle East have also placed many pitfalls in the path of the Scripture scholar as he advances with hesitant step, and have rendered necessary the direction which the Holy See has never failed to provide. At one time indeed the dangers seemed so great that scholars were slow to offer new solutions for the many problems which confront the reader of the Bible. The encouragement given them by the late Pope Pius XII resulted in a tremendous quickening in the tempo of Bible studies, and gave them courage to face an often unwilling public with new solutions for old problems. This work of restraint, direction and encouragement is but the exercise by the Church in modern times of a divinely given function, that of *Guardian of the Word*, a topic on which Father Leahy writes well.

Many misunderstandings in biblical questions derive from an inadequate notion of inspiration. People often think of it as an overpowering divine influence which completely obliterates the personality of the human writer and produces a work which is exclusively divine. They picture him with pen poised awaiting the onrush of a divine force which relieves him of the need for thinking and makes him more writing machine than man. Considered in this way, inspiration hardly leaves room for the divergence in literary style, for the awkward stumblings of man as he gropes through the darkness of his ignorance towards the light, for the change of emphasis in the face of the moral and political needs of the hour, all of which reflect the efforts of human authors of various times and temperaments to convey The Word of God in Human Speech ——the title of an article by Father Michael Baily, C.SS.R. In it he explains the doctrine of inspiration which while it attributes to God that activity and authorship which make the Bible something divine, yet respects the human personality of the writer. The book he writes is the product of his own industry and native wit, and is at the same time a worthy instrument of God's revelation. From time to time, Almighty God did, of course, communicate some knowledge to the writer which was inaccessible to human reasoning and research, but in passing on such truths to his fellowmen, the inspired author inevitably left the imprint of his language and thought forms on God's message.

A careful reading of this article on inspiration brings a new understanding to the approach of writers of subsequent articles. Father Jerome Kiely writes about ' The Bible as Literature.' The main function of the Bible is to convey God's message to man, and the literary dress in which it appears is intended to be a help, not a hindrance, to the reader. There is therefore no reason why one should not enjoy the Bible as literature, and learn to respond to the variety of literary experience it offers. Parable and poetry, history and hymns, proverbs and historical novels, prophetic utterance and apocalyptic vision are the instruments chosen by God to teach mankind. Their very variety, however,

makes it essential for the reader ' to know just what kind of book he is reading . . . many adults (not all of them lay) regard the first chapters of Genesis as a scientific chronicle, Judith as straightforward history and Job as biography. They are nothing of the kind.'

God's revelation to man involved a series of historical events which are strung out over a period of nearly two thousand years. There was a time when these events had not happened; then there came a day when God spoke to man and the course of history was changed. What had been the course of history up to that time? The men who received that message were not without race or nationality, and it was to men of their own race and nationality that they had to make God's message known. To help us grasp some of the political forces which fashioned the people of Israel, Father Donal O'Connor places them in the historical context of the Middle East during the two thousand years that they meditated God's message to man.

Father James Brennan puts ' The Bible in Perspective,' lest when reading sections of it, we overlook the master plan which inspires it as a whole. Father Kevin Smyth, S.J., gives an excellent summary of his own solid work on The Dead Sea Scrolls. Two articles, Teaching the Bible in School by Father Michael Tynan, and The Old Testament and our Youth, by Father Jerome Twomey, C.M., appeal for more extensive use of the Bible in the teaching of religion and make suggestions about how this might be done. The relationship between the science of theology and the Bible is covered by Father Conleth Kearns, O.P., and the place which the Bible occupies in the public and private prayer of the Church receives the attention of Don Columba Breen, O.S.B., in The Bible and the Liturgy and Father Kevin Condon, C.M., in The Bible, Book of Devotion. Group Study of the Bible by the reviewer describes what is being done on the Continent and outlines the organization of such groups.

There is much that is useful in this book, but of its nature it is incomplete and the articles wisely conclude with short reading lists. The frequency with which the same titles recur draws attention to the shortage of Catholic biblical literature in English. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome Father Moriarty's contribution to this need: *Introducing the Old Testament.* Like *The Word of Life,* it is not exactly an introduction to the Old Testament; it does not cover all the questions dealt with in an introduction, and its approach is different. Father Moriarty ' builds his presentation of the Old Testament around its leading characters ' and gives us fifteen essays in historical biography. The biblical persons chosen cover the two thousand year span of biblical history, beginning with Abraham and ending with Daniel. This type of writing may tempt the author to flights of fancy when facts are few. Father Moriarty resists such temptations, and when biographical material is slight, he concentrates on the historical background of the period in which his subject lived. He makes judicious use of contemporary documents and the evidence of archaeological investigation.

The founding fathers of Israel—Abraham, Moses and Joshua, are the subjects of the first three essays, while Saul and David are chosen from the long line of Israelite kings. The development of the prophetic movement is studied in the persons of Elijah, Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem (the eighth century prophet), Jeremiah, Ezechiel, and Second Isaiah. The return from the

Babylonian captivity and the attempts at rebuilding the past glories of Israel are re-told from the memoirs of Nehemiah. Wisdom literature is represented by the patient Job and the cranky Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), while the last essay is devoted to Daniel's apocalyptic view of the future.

This is not a book for the specialist; it is the first in a series called ' Impact Books,' which, to quote the publishers, are destined for ' the average man.' Since they are intended to be popular the price should not be an obstacle to their popularity. 4.25 dollars may be a popular price in America, but 34s., the price at which the book sells here, is about three times too dear, and will prevent this attractive and useful book reaching the public for whom it is intended.

DERMOT RYAN

THE ONE TRUE KIRK. By Ronald Walls. London: Burns Oates. 1960. 15s.

DURING the last hundred years there have appeared many interesting conversion narratives, headed, I suppose, by Newman's *Apologia,* though it could be claimed that his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* gives a more convincing account of his real reasons for submission; most of these have been, however, descriptions of spiritual progress from agnosticism or even Communism, and in many cases from the Anglican Communion, if we except the autobiography of the late Dr W. E. Orchard, a Congregationalist, whose *From Faith to Faith* caused some stir thirty years ago. Here, however, we have something new, the life story of a Scottish Presbyterian minister who has recently become a Catholic, after serving a parish in the Highlands of his country.

I wonder if anybody nowadays reads John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees,* though these are still available in Dent's *Everyman* edition ? Few books, if any, give such a vivid picture of Presbyterian life in Scotland, and I always remember how, when studying history at Oxford, my tutor advised me to read the former, because it described so well the coming of the industrial revolution to the Clydeside area. Ronald Walls may be said to belong to the Galt tradition, which is different from that of Sir Walter Scott, whose books are undoubtedly coloured by his Anglican or Episcopalian background, and he writes with real freshness of Scottish Presbyterian ways; most of us Catholics must own that of these we know next to nothing. He writes with deep humour and with genuine affection for his former parishioners and fellow-ministers. Gladly would one meet the Edinburgh ' professor of Christian dogmatics ', who when heckled by one of his students declared that ' a Kirk without a Hell isn't worth a damn ', and who as a young minister had caused scandal by going to a fancy dress ball dressed as a sheikh.

Mr Wall's contacts with the Catholic Church were spasmodic and unusual. As a student he was the guest of a Hungarian Catholic family, in return for speaking English, and used to go to Mass with them on Sundays, while he later began to read Catholic books, notably Ronald Knox's *Belief of Catholics* and Gregory Dix's *Shape of the Liturgy.* It is true that the latter is by an Anglican, but it is thoroughly Catholic in tone, and I have been assured by the President of a large Catholic seminary that it is widely used by the students.

Of special interest is the account of a celebration of the Holy Communion in the author's parish church, a service much influenced by liturgical ideas, to the dismay of one of the elders.

Later came a meeting with a Catholic under unusual circumstances. Near to the author's home was a German prisoner-of-war camp, to the inmates of which he must have shown considerable kindness; among them was a conscripted Catholic priest, a Franciscan. A firm friendship grew up, and there was a valuable exchange of ideas. As Mr Walls writes, this priest was the first who ' understood my problem and took it seriously '. He had some wise words to say, which are worth quoting, as they may have been decisive in the long run: ' The Protestant Church in Scotland originally stated the principle that the teaching Church has no absolute authority. This was necessary in order to permit of the reconstituting of the Church at the Reformation. But now it is adopting the Catholic principle that it is the right and duty of the Church to give authoritative definitions of doctrine: and it does this in order to counteract the disintegration of doctrine caused by complete liberty of opinion on doctrine.' This may seem simple enough to Catholics, but these words were almost a relevation to the puzzled author, who was essentially a case of *fides quaerens intellectum,* and could not make out where to find the authority for his beliefs. ' That night,' he says, ' my wife and I had plenty to talk about.'

During the following year, we are told, he devoted his afternoons to studying the *Catechism of the Council of Trent,* and surprised the other members of his Presbytery would surely have been, had they known what he was doing. Then, by chance, during his summer holiday, he was taken by a friend to visit the Cistercian Abbey at Nunraw in East Lothian. ' Although monks were a species of men hitherto quite unknown to us, we were at home instantly, and with easy unselfconsciousness I found myself explaining to the guest fathers the uncomfortable position my wife and I were in . . . a fortnight later, back in our own parish, the mood of suspended animation persisted; but now we felt we had some living contact with the Catholic Church; that it was no longer something we had discovered only in reading.'

The suspended animation did not last long, and the following winter they were received into the Church at Nunraw Abbey, after what must have been a very painful parting from their parishioners and the local Presbytery; very moving is the account of the devoted beadle, who was the porter at the station, seeing them off. The final step is described with magnificent conciseness : ' The whole ceremony was short and straightforward, quite unemotional, and afterwards we had tea in the guest-house when the Abbot said, " it is not customary for the baby to cut its own cake, so I had better do it " '. He is Dom Columban Mulcahy, a brother of General Richard Mulcahy, well known to all Irish readers.

Being myself a convert, I am specially interested in convert literature, and try not to miss each new addition to it. I think however this is one of the most fascinating, human and at the same time most logical of convert stories that have come my way, and with its appreciation of country people it has all the qualities of a good novel. It is to be hoped we shall have more books from Ronald Walls. Very welcome he is among us.

WICKLOW

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN ENGLAND—Volume III—*THE TUDOR AGE*. By Dom David Knowles. Cambridge University Press. 1959. 55s.

This fine volume ends a series of four volumes which began with the publication of *The Monastic Order in England* (1940), in which Dom David Knowles gave an impressive survey of the part played by the older monastic orders (Benedictine, Cluniac, Cistercian, Carthusian) in the life of England from the time of St. Dunstan to the death of Innocent III. Since then Father Knowles has become a fellow of Peterhouse, Professor of Medieval History, and more recently Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge. He has also added three volumes to his first volume, enlarging their scope under a new title so as to include the canons regular (Augustinian, Premonstratensian, Gilbertine) and the four orders of mendicant friars. In this final volume of the series he describes the life and economic condition of all these religious orders in the early years of the sixteenth century, and tells in broad outline, with special attention to the more notable houses of men and women, the sorry story of their surrender to Henry VIII and the final disaster of suppression and almost total extinction.

To the general reader this volume will be of interest as giving a Benedictine scholar's final verdict on a controversy in which the names of Gasquet and Coulton and Baskerville have been familiar to us all. He will find Father Knowles willing to concede manifest faults of monastic carelessness, lack of discipline and (in the more disorderly houses) immoral conduct; willing also to concede that the ease with which so much wealth and (more tragically) so noble a tradition was surrendered makes a sad ending to six centuries of high endeavour; willing also to concede that the majority of the monks who were affected by the suppression were able to establish themselves in reasonable comfort under the new Henrician scheme of things. But he will find more than that.

Father Knowles is a critical historian, but he is also a monk whose life has been moulded by monastic ideas; and he nowhere writes more movingly than when he is describing monastic life as lived by the monks of Durham, the nuns and brethren of Syon or the monks of the London Charterhouse. His account of the Carthusian resistance to the royal supremacy is perhaps the finest of many fine passages; though I find that the sentences in which he describes the last journey and death of the last abbot of Glastonbury linger even longer in my memory. Yet, to take Abbot Whiting's story as an example of many others, Father Knowles is too good a critic to accept this well-meaning, but somewhat pathetic abbot as a true martyr for the Faith. 'He took his death patiently, asking pardon of God and the King for his offences', we are told in a contemporary account. In a foot-note we find the historian's comment: 'More, Fisher, Reynolds, the Carthusians and Forest might pray for Henry, but they had no reason to ask his pardon'.

An Irish reviewer must ask himself how far the story told in these pages corresponds with what happened here in Ireland. Certain features are common to the two countries. The Observant Friars Minor were leaders in both countries in their open resistance to the king. The Cistercian monks and Augustinian canons regular were (in Ireland even more than in England) in

need of reform. The women, so far as they appear in the story, did better than the men—if we except a few heroic figures. There were few Benedictine houses in Ireland; and the most important (Downpatrick) has an inglorious history. I know of no evidence to suggest that here in Ireland there was that early sympathy with humanist ideals which Father Knowles describes in his account of Prior Selling of Canterbury, Abbot Kidderminster of Winchcombe or (and here he reveals new evidence) in the small group of humanist monks who exchanged private letters with Robert Joseph Beecham, a monk of Evesham.

The economic background, just before the suppression, is described in a chapter which is based partly on the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, as analysed in 1909 by a Russian scholar, A. Savine; partly on the account rolls of the Victorine abbey of St. Augustine's, Bristol. No Irish scholar has made an adequate study of that section of the *Valor* which deals with a few Anglo-Irish houses; and an important register of the Victorine abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin (a house which had close connections with St. Augustine's, Bristol) lies still unpublished, in two separate manuscript parts.

A surprising light on Anglo-Irish piety in the fifteenth century is given, quite casually, by Father Knowles in his chapter on the London Charterhouse. The three leaders of the small band of heroes from this most fervent community were Prior John Houghton, William Exmew and Sebastian Newdigate. All three were young men who had been received as novices by Prior William Tynbygh, who ruled the house for 30 years (1500-1530) and who had lived there as a Carthusian monk since 1470. Father Knowles notes that a family tradition concerning Tynbygh's father mentions his house in Ireland, and a private chapel in this house. He concludes that the prior was ' Irish or Anglo-Irish by race, and of good family '.

Very little research is needed to place the family of Tynbygh more accurately. The name first appears in two deeds of the Dublin Guild of St. Anne, dated 1332 and 1335. Nicholas Tynbegh, clerk, then owned a tenement ' in the suburb of Dublin outside the Bar in the parish of St. James '. In 1350 this Nicholas was granted land in the parish of ' Ballibaghyl ' by the abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin, in reward for his services. In 1401 one of the Christ Church deeds mentions William Tynbeggh as seneschal of the archbishop's manor of St. Sepulchre in Dublin; and in 1424 William, now treasurer of Ireland, directs Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin and chancellor of Ireland, to grant custody of land to a person named in another of the Christ Church deeds. William had acquired a house and land in the parish of St. Patrick, Dublin; and this ' land of William de Tynbegh ' is mentioned in several deeds (1411; 1417; 1441; 1455). In a deed of the Guild of St. Anne (1450) the ' land of Nicholas Tynbegh ', apparently the same land, is mentioned as being near the church of St Patrick; and in June 1476 an entry on the assembly rolls of the city of Dublin records the fact that Nicholas Tynbeigh, gentleman, was admitted by special grace to the franchise of the city.

Young William Tynbygh, the future prior of the London Charterhouse, entered that house as a novice in 1470. We have no precise record of his parentage, but it seems probable that his father was this Nicholas who (according to a family tradition, known to his son's fellow-monks) went as a

pilgrim to the Holy Land (we do not know in what year), was taken prisoner on his pilgrimage and was miraculously restored to his house in Ireland. Father Knowles is unaware of this Dublin background, and he deserves to be rebuked for omitting both Ireland and Dublin from his Index.

We are all of us only too familiar with a few names which are inevitably mentioned in this volume: John Allen, who visited some of the smaller English monastic houses as Cardinal Wolsey's commissioner before coming to Dublin as archbishop in 1529; George Browne, the provincial of the English Austin friars who came to Dublin in 1535 as Henry VIII's archbishop, and who is mentioned in this volume as having felled the best timber belonging to the Oxford priory of his order and as having departed with the jewels and plate; and John Bale, the former Carmelite friar who came to Kilkenny in 1553 as Edward VI's bishop of Ossory, and who was hunted from his diocese as soon as news of the accession of Queen Mary reached Kilkenny. These are sad memories. All unaware (so it seems) of what he was doing, Father Knowles has added a chapter to the history of the city of Dublin of which Dubliners have every reason to be proud.

This volume does not end with the suppression, first of the smaller houses in 1535-6, then of the surviving greater monasteries in 1538-9. Apart from the story of what happened to the former monks, and in particular to the former abbots and priors, of whom William More, the prosperous landlord-prior of Worcester is a notable type, there is a valuable account of the brief restoration under Queen Mary, with Abbot Feckenham of Westminster as the central figure; and a critical examination of the Benedictine tradition which seeks to link the new men of the seventeenth century with the survivors of the Marian restoration at Westminster by a formal transmission of legal rights, made by Father Sigebart Buckley, one of the prisoners at Wisbech Castle in the first years of James I.

So ends, and begins again, a story which has found a worthy and most sympathetic interpreter in a writer who combines in his own person the training of a critical academic historian with the age-old traditions and ideals of monastic life.

AUBREY GWYNN

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA. By Mary Purcell. Dublin: Gill. 1960. 19s. 6d.

SAINT Anthony is a saint whom we all know by name, and to whom we have often turned in prayer for very practical reasons. But we have only to read this admirable *Life* to see at once how little we have known of the man himself. Some twenty-five years ago I had the good fortune to visit Padua, and I had hopes that his great church in that city might bring me nearer to the saint himself. But my memory is of a vast building, with endless side-altars and shrines and relics of the saint, which seem to have little to do with the pure tradition of Francis himself and his first companions. Miss Purcell has done for me what I sought in vain at Padua. She has gone herself, not only to Lisbon and Padua and Rimini and other cities connected with St. Anthony's life, but she has gone to endless trouble to set her story in the background of Catholic life in the Europe of Anthony's day.

Portugal was his native country, and Lisbon his native city. The legends that would make this friar the scion of some noble family have little value, and Miss Purcell is almost certainly right in her view that this most lovable saint was, from first to last, a man of the people. ' He was the son of ordinary citizens of Lisbon ', so writes one who had known the monastery in which Anthony got his first lessons in religious life. But no one knew him as Anthony in those days—the first years of the thirteenth century. His name was Fernando de Bulhões. It was not until he became a follower of Saint Francis in 1220 that Fernando took the name Anthony which has become so popular ever since.

At Lisbon young Fernando received his first education in the cathedral school. Miss Purcell is to be complimented on the skill with which she has succeeded in bringing to life the kind of teaching in a cathedral school in which so many of the best brains of the thirteenth century got their education. At an early age (dates are never reliable in this story) young Fernando entered the monastery of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine at Lisbon; but he had made too many friends for his peace of mind as a novice. Finding that his friends would not leave him in peace—and a novice's life was more easily exposed to distraction and temptation in those days than it would be today—Fernando asked for permission to go from the Lisbon house of his order to a famous monastery of Canons Regular at Coimbra, Santa Cruz. Here he lived as a fervent canon regular for several years, and here most probably—though even this fact is uncertain—he was ordained a priest. The challenge of a new and more apostolic life came in 1220 when news reached Coimbra that five of the first Friars Minor, who had made their way to Morocco as preachers of the Gospel, had been martyred in that Muslim land. Their relics were brought to Coimbra with great pomp. But Fernando was not content to venerate the relics. He sought and obtained (within 24 hours, it seems) permission to leave his monastery, take the humble habit and girdle of a Friar Minor and offer himself for the mission to the Muslims of Morocco. His prayer was granted; but ill health brought that quest for martyrdom to an untimely end. For the rest of his short life—he was not a Friar Minor for more than ten years—Anthony ' the Lusitanian ' (as men called him from the Latin name of his native country) worked as a zealous preacher in Italy, in France, and once again in Italy.

Dates and even places are often uncertain, and Miss Purcell has constantly to supplement the meagre biographical material by skilful use of the known historical background. But we have the saint's sermon-notes, which give us more than a glimpse into the saint's mind. Very rightly, Miss Purcell points to his frequent use of scientific facts and details of natural history as proof that his early education at Lisbon, where Moorish influences were strong, had left its mark on him for life. But she goes too far when she says that the name of Fernando's native city is Moorish in origin. Surely Olissipone or Ulissipone was a name known to the Roman governors of Lusitania. But the Portuguese background, whether Roman or Moorish, with its traditions of sea-faring and its Atlantic outlook, are an essential feature of young Fernando's life; and the dramatic violence of Portuguese history—which reminded me constantly of Irish and Hiberno-Norman history at that same time—gives life to a story which otherwise might be disappointingly bare of detail.

More perplexing is the fact that Brother Anthony's part in the controversies which gave such trouble to the Friars Minor in the years immediately following the death of Saint Francis is far from clear. Miss Purcell follows the tradition which represents him as opposing the notorious Brother Elias and defending the founder's testament in the matter of Holy Poverty. Yet she makes it plain that Anthony, who had studied in a great Augustinian monastery and who was a master of theology, supported the party which urged the need of study for the priesthood, and of houses of study and libraries as an essential part of the order's development. Brother Anthony was provincial of the Italian province of the Romagna for some years before his death at Padua, and Padua was one of the main centres of learning in the Italy of his day. It is surprising that the order's tradition on this point should be hesitating and uncertain; but Pius XII had a sure instinct when he declared this first professor of theology in the Franciscan order to be a Doctor of the Church, and gave him the honourable title: *Doctor Evangelicus*. It is indeed as a preacher of Christ's Gospel and as a wonder-worker in the tradition of Christian piety that Miss Purcell has depicted this son of Portugal and Italy in her most attractive biography.

AUBREY GWYNN

MODERN CATHOLIC THINKERS. An Anthology. Edited, with a preface, by A. Robert Caponigri. Burns and Oates: London. 1960. 63s.

THE SON OF MAN. By François Mauriac. Burns and Oates: London. 1960. 12s. 6d.

ANTHOLOGIES can be unsatisfactory. *Modern Catholic Thinkers* is a gigantic anthology of over six hundred pages. I opened the book, then, with forebodings only to find that it was one of the richest things that has come my way for a long time.

Here are the names of some of the writers: von Balthasar; Maurice Blondel; the Dominican Yves Congar; Daniélou; the Englishmen Fr Philip Hughes and Christopher Dawson; Romano Guardini; Etienne Gilson; Jean Guitton; Fr Jungmann, the expert on the Mass; Louis Lavelle who succeeded Bergson in the *Collège de France*; Fr Henri de Lubac, the learned Jesuit theologian, who writes with such beauty; Gabriel Marcel; the Maritains; the American Jesuit, J. Courtney Murray; Josef Pieper; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin; Sigrid Undset from the north.

These are the household words of vigorous Catholic thinking over the last thirty years. Reading these writers for the first time is an adventure. Rereading them is to review and refresh one's mental and spiritual past.

The purpose of this anthology is apologetics. People ask: can one hold an intransigent faith like the Catholic faith and preserve any freedom and vigour of thought? Are not Catholics, like the Marxists, mental slaves? Here is the answer. Good Catholic thinking (while remaining entirely orthodox) has been and is remarkably free, wide, daring, contemporary and never smug.

The anthology makes its point. Fr Martin D'Arcy, in a foreword, puts it well. The Catholic thinker, he says, does not ' content himself with wiping and

polishing an old set of ideas. He chooses freely and with deliberation his belief, and embraces a system because he is passionately convinced that it is true; true, moreover, in the sense that it is not inanimate but alive, holding the past in its keeping and probing into the present with life-giving energy. Discipleship is hardly the word for such a conviction; it is rather that the holder of it is in the original sense of the word a philosopher, a lover of wisdom.' Fr D'Arcy points out that a Catholic philosopher, much as he admires the integrity and scientific approach of modern non-christian thinkers from whom he can learn a great deal, is disappointed by modern philosophy because it never seems to go beyond the preliminaries to thought. Their incomplete systems (for they have systems too) have shut some modern thinkers off from effective thinking on real problems. 'Critical philosophy is busy questioning all who pass by and debating the way out of darkness; the Catholic feels the sun at his back and is in admiration of the infinite landscape before him.'

Once again, the anthology makes its point and the attitude it combats is an actual attitude that one has encountered. Yet, I am not quite happy about the avowed purpose of the book: I find the apologetic aim too timid. This anthology can stand on its merits as an outstanding collection of arduous, original thinking and of vigorous, strong writing. The cost is high but it is a spiritual library of the best kind.

As a sample of its quality let me refer to one essay. I choose the article by Yves de Montcheuil, of the Society of Jesus, called *The Ideal of Christian Humanism.*

What is Christian Humanism? It is putting a true value (which is a high value) on what is truly human and integrating what is truly human with one's Christianity. We must be both things: full Christians and full men. We must place our humanity fully at the service of our Christianity. In order to be holy men we must first of all be, quite simply, men. ' Therefore,' writes Fr de Montcheuil, ' there is no such thing as a Christian superimposed on man, but instead a Christian deeply rooted in man.'

Some people, following Nietzche, want to sacrifice the Christian to the man. Some, mostly Catholics, want to sacrifice the man to the Christian. This latter negation, says de Montcheuil, is less radical but none the less dangerous: ' the human element is disparaged '. Such people ' do not go to the extreme of declaring that it is necessary to blight the man in order to give more vitality to the Christian, but in practice that is what they do.' Such an anti-humanist attitude is not unknown in Ireland.

Of the use of the mind Fr de Montcheuil writes: ' . . . if one does not cultivate a certain taste for seeking, a certain desire for clarity, for penetration, one will not go deeply into the Christian truths.' In God's ordinary providence, without a special grace not always given, that is very true. He quotes Fr Teilhard de Chardin: ' The greatest danger which humanity may fear is not some external catastrophe, famine or plague . . . but rather that spiritual malady (the most terrible because it is the most human of all the scourges) which is the loss of one's love of life. . . . It is a great illusion to believe that this love of life will really exist in the religious life if it is prevented from existing on the level of the natural activities '. Is it possible, one wonders, that those thinkers who abandon Christian Humanism, or those non-thinkers who live

in opposition to Christian Humanism, do so because they have lost their love of life?

Christian Humanism, a Christian love of the human element (in life, in others and in oneself) is possible but one must not ignore the theoretical and practical difficulties of the problem. ' While the term " Christian Humanism " is a current one,' writes de Montcheuil, ' it is often used without the slightest idea of the problems which it poses and which must first be solved if the term is to have an intelligent meaning. The problems, however, are so numerous and complex that we might wonder how it is possible to speak at all of the subject without necessarily forgetting something essential '. For instance, it must be understood that ' humanism ' has no limited arty significance. ' The creative artist fills an indispensable function in society ' but ' I absolutely refuse to accord the title of cultivated man to the idle dilettante, capable of enjoying and appreciating the arts, but not carrying on any useful activity himself '. It is necessary too to understand humanism in a broad and not a too limited greco-roman sense.

I do not disguise, or apologize for, the difficulty of some of these essays. The writing is lucid but the subject matter is not always easy. For example, in René le Senne's hitherto unpublished paper on *The Movement of God* we read: ' That which creates and embraces everything in such a way that what is created and embraced not only remains in it but is still relatively distinct from it is Spirit '. Or take this sentence, from the same essay, ' A spirit such that it localizes its action at some point of the whole, which it embraces and restrains, is conscious '. Of course that is difficult. It has every right to be so. Depending on one's mental preparation it might take a week, a month or a year to exhaust the meanings of those sentences. But, then, a couple of sentences have enriched our minds.

How much better is such reading, difficult and necessarily slow though it may be, than the too facile pietistic pap some people seem to prefer. There should be some hard reading in everyone's life, no matter how busy he may be. Reading that is as easy as detective stories—although it is a pleasant and peaceful way of spending the time—leaves the mind much as it found it: empty. The writing in this anthology, even if not as difficult always as le Senne, is rarely facile. Karl Rahner, the Austrian Jesuit, says quite bluntly by way of introduction to *On the Theology of Death* ' Death is one of the most shocking things in human life '. That is no consoling platitude.

This book is exciting. It is pleasant, having tried to review it, to look forward to reading it again in peace. It should take a year and it should be improving.

François Mauriac dedicates his *The Son of Man* ' to Elie Wiesel who was a crucified Jewish child '. Wiesel just escaped from the Nazi furnaces in which his parents were burned alive and his strong Jewish spiritual life, says Mauriac, ' can help us to understand, humanly speaking, what the Child Jesus was like, ' Next comes a quotation from Lacordaire: ' Striving for love all our lives, we never achieve it except in so imperfect a manner that our hearts bleed.'

This admirable book is written with what I can only call passion. That is to say: it is written with a savage realization of the importance of religion, with a savage honesty and awareness of the difficulty of religion and with the

corresponding care about words. There is emotion in this little book of personal meditation and confession but never ' undisciplined squads of emotion '. Every word, even in translation, is meant and felt. A theological tyro could, perhaps, trip Mauriac up in verbal inaccuracies: but that is a paltry game. It takes a lifetime of painfully lived Catholicity to produce Mauriac's insight. One is forced to ask whether anyone should attempt to write a book of piety (for *The Son of Man* is in that traditional genre) without being driven to it by an intensity of feeling like Mauriac's.

In his meditation on Christmas, Mauriac writes: ' I adore him trembling with joy, kneeling over the common graves of Europe and carrying within me the memories of concentration camps, the charred corpses of women and children in the ruins of French, German, Russian and Japanese cities. . . . ' He says, of Christ's rejection by men, ' Someone was there; He has always been there; but we preferred everything—even anything—to Him. It is only in the desert that comes at the end of life, in the aridity of old age, that even those who followed the Lord from afar can really choose Him: there is no one else, there is nothing else left.' No Christopher-Robin romanticism about children sickens us here: ' I believe none the less in the sanctity of childhood, in that good faith, in that hope, in that sacred weakness which we will conceal until our last breath. . . . Men always amuse themselves like children. . . . Their crimes are like those of a child: the Nazis too pulled off the legs of human insects. . . . But if the corruption of childhood is the worst kind, the sanctity of children is what most resembles God.'

Mauriac writes with a truly Christian, truly contemporary sensibility which is aware that devotion, if it is sincere, must not be facile, that religion offers no ivory tower. It can be said that he is in constant flight from the innocent, untried happiness of childhood to an adult's mature happiness realized through suffering. The flight is, perhaps, somewhat compulsive and it could be said that Mauriac is disillusioned. But disillusionment is not a dirty word as is sometimes thought: it can mean—something that we all aim at doing—shedding genuine illusions.

In conclusion, let me quote once more. ' If I were to give a reason ', writes Mauriac, ' for my fidelity to Christ in this evening of my life, I would call it the quieting of the radical anguish that is in me. . . . My very singular anguish which I did not learn from anyone, tormented me from the moment I began to grow aware of the tragedy implied in the fact of being a man . . . a creature condemned to death and who lives under a stay of execution for an unknown length of time. . . . ' That passage explains some of the novels and, as well, is the key to the great compassion that is at the heart of Mauriac.

JOHN C. KELLY

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES AND ECONOMIC LIFE. By John F. Cronin, S.S., Ph.D. Milwaukee : Bruce Publishing Company. 1959. Pp. xxiii and 436. $6.50.

FR CRONIN originally intended merely to review and to condense his well-known *Catholic Social Principles.* In the process, however, so many changes became necessary that in order to avoid confusion it was decided to issue

the work under a different name. The present book is little more than half the bulk of the earlier work ; the treatment of the more general topics, such as the social virtues, property, philosophies of economic life, has been greatly condensed. The biggest changes occur in Part III where there are completely new chapters on International Political and Economic Life, on Racial Discrimination and Racial Justice. In spite of these changes the book still retains the characteristic features that made Cronin's work so well-known : the clarity of treatment, the copious quotations from papal and episcopal sources that preceded and the special reading lists that followed each chapter.

It would be surprising if in the eight years that elapsed since the first appearance of *Catholic Social Principles*, Fr Cronin had not changed his opinion on some disputed points of doctrine. One very notable change is contained in chapter 10, ' The Living Wage and Full Employment '. His earlier teaching had been that the living wage was due in commutative justice ; ' it is now held that the obligation to pay a living wage is primarily a matter of social justice ' (p. 209). In this change of opinion he has been greatly influenced by Professor M. Fogarty's article in *Review of Social Economy* (September 1957), but he does not think that there is much prospect of carrying out Fogarty's idea of worker insurance in the U.S.A. The new work contains a fuller treatment of the ' closed ' or ' union ' shop. He admits that it has dangers—but for him the dangers are racketeers. He seems to have overlooked one of the most crucial problems of modern trade unionism. How can we protect the rights of the individual against the might of the collectivity ? Of course, this problem is not confined to trade unions, but some recent English court cases, the writing of journals and authors not hostile to unions have made the general public aware of the great injustices that can arise when a worker loses his job when he is dismissed from a trade union that has a ' closed or union shop ' agreement with his employer. This point is mentioned to stress that much of what Fr Cronin has written is applicable first and foremost to the U.S.A. ; his practical applications of Catholic social teaching need not necessarily be true for other countries.

KEVIN QUINN

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY STUDIES. Volume One : *The Philosophy of Science.* St. John's University Press. New York, 1960. Pp. 164.

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES. Volume Nine. St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland. 1959. Pp. 275. 12s. 6d.

WE have here two worthwhile reviews. The former is the first of a quarterly series, the latter is, at least at present, limited to one issue a year.

The St John's University Studies are the result of the first session of the institute in the philosophy of science of that university. The aim of this first session was to give a general view of the relations between philosophy and the natural sciences. Further volumes will deal with more particular questions : the second volume, for instance, will treat of the philosophy of physics.

The first essay is a general survey, by W. E. Carlo, Ph.D., of philosophy, the various sciences and their interrelations. These relations are further

illustrated in the four essays following. Fr William Kane, O.P. examines the reasons for the facts of organic life ; Vincent E. Smith, Ph.D. treats of the constitution of matter ; Reverend A. B. Wolter, O.F.M. presents a theory of chemical substance, while Rudolf Allers gives an extremely clear account of the development and status of the notion of the unconscious.

With the exception of one essay this volume presents what many be called the orthodox Scholastic view of the philosophy of nature. The one exception is the essay on chemical substance in which Fr Wolter attempts to break new ground : in the context of a Scotist philosophy he elaborates what might be labelled, a little harshly perhaps, a sophisticated dynamism. Yet this essay is important in that it brings to light a central problem, and grounds an essential criticism of this first volume. The problem it brings up is the problem of the ' Scotist intellect ' to which we will return later. The criticism regards the absence of any attempt to discuss the source in man of scientific knowledge, the activities of his complex consciousness in its emergence, or the relations of explanatory account, sensible model and verifying experiment. Surely it is in this region that clarification is required, that foundations are to be laid ?

The second review *Philosophical Studies* offers a much wider range of topics. Besides the main articles there are 140 pages of critical notices and reviews which put the reader in touch with modern currents in many fields. One could not possibly notice all that is worthwhile. Fr Dermot Mulligan's article on moral evil, in which he analyses texts both of St Thomas and of his commentators, helps to bring out the fact that in trying to understand what St Thomas thought one can rely securely only on what St Thomas wrote. Dr C. B. Daly's contribution, ' The Knowableness of God ' is a clear and positive discussion of the relation of Metaphysics and Mystery, of the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God, and of the ways of knowing God. Article by Milton Fisk and Gavin Ardley are concerned with Karl Popper's theories of science. Besides these we have a further contribution by Joseph Bobik on 'Is Being a Genus ?', a brief discussion of Aristotle's Dilemma by Clive Ingram, and an interesting consideration of Liberty and Personality by Edwin Rabbitte. One essay which strikes an unusual note is that of N. D. O'Donoghue, O.D.C. in which he brings together the ascetical and philosophical ideas of humility and existence.

In a critical notice on Mr. Ernest Gellner's ' Words and Things ' we find a very fine defence of linguistic philosophy by J. M. Cameron of Leeds. His main thesis is that the description and analysis of concepts, above all those concepts which manifest both generality and obscurity, has been the concern of philosophers from Aristotle to Ryle. Indeed, it must be conceded that linguistic philosophy is of value : but it does seem to suffer from the centuries-old bias of most British philosophers towards the ' Scotist intellect ' which was mentioned earlier in another context. The radical flaw in the theory of intellect of Scotus is that it relegates to the unconscious the formation of concepts : intellection proper begins with the comparison of conceptual contents. Through the influence of such a theory philosophy might well come to disregard the process of conception in favour of the concepts themselves, and might come to identify understanding with a mere facility in

using concepts. A critical reading of such men as Locke and Hume will reveal that such a theory did in fact enter the current of British philosophy. Further, each new effort to understand Aquinas shows that its influence has impoverished the scholastic philosophy of the present revival. Perhaps, even, it is not unconnected with the deficiency pointed out in the first volume under review. Indeed one suspects that the shade of Scotus has haunted many a Thomist mind.

PHILIP MCSHANE.

TOLSTOY OR DOSTOEVSKY: An Essay In Contrast. By George Steiner. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. 1960. Pp. 355. 30s.

LITERARY criticism should arise out of a debt of love. We seek to record the impact on us of great works of art, and to convey to others the quality and force of our experience. . . . Not to judge or to anatomize, but to meditate.

This, in brief, is the aim which Mr Steiner sets before him at the outset of his brilliant and sometimes wise study of the two greatest practitioners of the art of the novel—Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. It is not a mean aim. It is one which calls for a maturity and a depth of imaginative sympathy that only a few critics in the history of literature have possessed. It is therefore not harsh criticism to say at once that Mr Steiner has fallen short of his high aim. Most critics do not aim so high. They are content to judge and to anatomize, and would regard the suggestion that only love and meditation were demanded of them as nonsensical. It is to Mr Steiner's credit that he rejects the pretentions of the ' new criticism '; but unfortunately he is a child of his age and cannot help being influenced by what he rejects.

Some of the theses Mr Steiner ingeniously argues are evidence of a brilliant mind, but show little of the wise and meditative love suggested in the opening pages. What, for instance, are we to think of his insistence on the affinity between Russian and American literature? He quotes Henry James alongside Dostoevsky, links *War and Peace* with *The Red Badge of Courage,* Hawthorne and Melville with Gogol, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and, most extraordinary of all, cites Ivan Karamazov's declaration of love for Europe as a possible motto of American literature from Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* to T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets.* It is strange that one can be so erudite and yet so impercipient. Russian literature, as Mr Steiner knows, was religious, even messianic. ' The Russian mind was literally God-haunted,' he says. ' Hence the radical distinction between nineteenth century fiction in Western Europe and in Russia. It is remarkable that he does not see that the same distinction lies between Russian literature and the essentially secular literature of America.

At times Mr Steiner has some of the aplomb of the ' new critics '. In passing, he refers to ' the luminous but unsteady insights of Gide's *Dostoevsky* '. He does not trouble to illustrate some of these ' unsteady insights ', assuming, no doubt, an intelligence equal to his own in the reader. If you happen to have thought highly of Gide's book, as I did, you will be properly abashed.

Forgetting his dictum, Mr Steiner judges and anatomizes, with the inevitable result that he falls into the trap of the academic critic—the uttering of solemn nonsense. In emphasizing his point that Tolstoy was influenced by

Madame Bovary in the writing of *Anna Karenina* he recalls the scene when Anna, having left Vronsky, catches sight of her husband again and thinks, "Oh mercy! why do his ears look like that?" ' Is this not Tolstoy's version of Emma Bovary's discovery that Charles makes uncouth noises while eating ? ' asks Mr Steiner. Now the poorest storyteller knows, as did Flaubert and Tolstoy, that when a person returns home from new and exciting places and people the familiar things and faces will appear drab, disappointing and even ugly. Mr Steiner's heavy-handedness epitomizes the danger of anatomizing, close reading, textual comparisons and all those other devices of the didactic critic.

The trouble with detailed commentary on texts is that it leads to an over-emphasis on trifles. Mr Steiner deals at some length with the symbolism and allegory he devines in the Dostoevskyan novel. He may be right in all he says, but does it really matter that the name ' Shatov ' means ' the waverer ' or that Stavrogin bears in his name the Greek word for ' cross ' ? Though it is hard to imagine them by any other names, it would matter little to the reader of *The Possessed* if these two ' God-haunted ' men were called Murphy and Malone.

It is a pity that Mr Steiner spends so much of his time arguing over trifles or producing evidence on evidence in support of untenable theses. For he is by no means a stupid man. His mind is extraordinarily acute and he possesses a rare talent for organizing a vast amount of material. Above all, he has added to our knowledge of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. He has shown us that Dostoevsky was deeply learned in the history of Europe and its literature, a fact too often ignored by commentators, and has demonstrated the falsity of distinguishing between the Tolstoy of the great novels and the Tolstoy of the tracts. Finally, his greatest merit is that he impresses on us once more the tremendous importance of both men. Compared with his reasoned and dignified approach how shallow and smart-aleck does the American novelist, Norman Mailer sound when he tells us that to the young intellectual of today Dostoevsky is ' hip ' while Tolstoy is ' square ' !

J. F. REYNOLDS.

THE LIFE OF JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. By F. A. Lea. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. 1959. Pp. 378. 30s.

' JACK can't fry a sausage without thinking of God,' complained Middleton Murry's first wife, Katherine Mansfield, irritated by his intellectual ecstasies while he was at work on his poem, ' The Critic in Judgment,' in 1913. This trenchant, affectionate judgment identifies Murry the man more incisively and more justly than most assessments either by his contemporary or subsequent inquisitors.

In a short preface to this biography of one of the most controversial figures in recent English letters, Mr Lea explains that, being the *official* biographer, he must largely leave interpretation and evaluation of Murry's achievement to others, and confine himself mainly to presenting the *man*. He admits readily the limitations imposed by this perspective, but overcomes them by tracing the consistent purpose which unified Murry's multifarious activities as editor,

literary critic, lover, politician, and farmer. Mr Lea, moreover, probes the vital relationship of Murry's solitary, and mainly tragic, experience to the theories he championed so vigorously. There emerges the Middleton Murry who was first and always a moralist, burning with a messianic zeal to determine —and to preach—' what is good for man '. This sense of dedicated urgency, a habitual ' striving to become,' *places* Murry most satisfactorily. It is not surprising that some of his best literary criticism was on Keats, whose lines from *Hyperion*

> None can usurp the height . . .
> But those to whom the miseries of the world
> Are misery, and will not let them rest

preoccupied Murry so persistently.

Keats was someone with whom Murry could identify himself almost completely; *Keats and Shakespeare*, one of his most perfect works, is a searching elucidation of the philosophy of intuition implicit in Keat's letters. ' What Keats meant by Negative Capability,' says Murry, ' is something very positive, indeed the highest of all qualities.' This quality—namely the facility, especially in the artist, of absorbing to oneself uncertainties, mysteries and doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—is strikingly present in Murry's own evaluation of Keats. But if we can refute the allegation that Murry identified his subject with himself—rather than himself with his subject—his own experience of life undoubtedly conditioned and added qualities of enduring tension and urgency to most of the forty odd books written between the early twenties and his death in 1957—notably those on Lawrence; Swift; the Russian Novelists; Keats; Shakespeare; Essays in *Discoveries*, *Countries of the Mind*, and *Love, Freedom and Society*; and especially *Adam and Eve*. In the last mentioned, Murry defines himself as ' a cleric without a church,' and puts his own finger on the nature and origin of his Quest; showing him, as Mr Lea says, as ' the representative figure of an age of breakneck social transition ' ; exposed to a pattern of society which appalled him and condemned to spend his life in attempting to discover a new one. On Murry's own confession, ' to find the true man-woman relation ' was, to him, ' more important than the achievement of artistic distinction. . . . To this search for integrity—the reconciliation of Heart and Mind, Emotion and Intellect—I have sacrificed whatever talent for art I possessed.' And again (six months before his death):

> I have the feeling that I have been completely outside the main stream of literature: that I don't ' belong ' and indeed never have belonged. My concern has always been that of the moralist and I have never been sufficient of the artist to be diverted from it. . . . We (himself, Katherine Mansfield and Lawrence) were all socially outsiders, quite without the social and domestic tradition which the Bloomburies, Aldous Huxley, and expatriate—*plus royaliste que le roi*—Eliot inherited. And, I think, experience came more naked and direct to us than to the others. To us, there was a sense in which they were all ' phoneys ' (in the nuance of *The Catcher in the Rye*). Love meant more to us: we needed it more.

Murry needed human love desperately; yet his experience of it was often tragic and confused. His first wife, Katherine Mansfield, died of tuberculosis

at 33; his second wife, by whom he had two children, died—also of tuberculosis —at 26; his third wife, for ten years during which two more children were born, subjected him and his children to sustained cruelty, bringing him to the edge of complete nervous disintegration; his fourth wife, Mary Gamble, gave him at last the peace he craved. But human love was not enough—as Murry's emotional, but patently sincere, involvements in socialism, communism and pacifism, in turn show.

Nevertheless, Mr Lea's book is limited—despite its honesty, its brilliant writing and its stimulating unity of thesis. Much of Middleton Murry's literary criticism deserves, I believe, far more serious attention than it receives today. Unfortunately, Mr Lea's book is unlikely to reduce this neglect. As editor of the *Athenaeum, The Adelphi,* and other journals, Murry was constantly involved in too much social and political controversy. This focussed attention on such activities at the expense of his important work as a critic, and added grist to the mills of his detractors. Granted, Murry is a little too emotional, too shrill at times—e.g. in his otherwise excellent book on Dostoevsky; but his *method* is never suspect e.g. ' the most fruitful way of approaching the doctrines of creative thinkers—men whose thought is destined to have a creative influence on the process of world history—is to approach them along the path of the process of their own formation: genetically or historically.' Again, in *The Problem of Style* (1922) much of what Eliot and later critics offered on the subject is anticipated: ' every work of enduring literature is not so much a triumph of language as a victory over language; a sudden injection of life-giving perceptions into a vocabulary what is, but for the energy of the creative thinker, perpetually on the verge of exhaustion.' Such clarity of judgment makes it difficult to see how Mr Hilary Corke, writing in *Encounter* (January 1960), can suggest that there was always a ' blanket of rainbowy cobwebs between Murry and anything simple and sensible.' Is it, perhaps, because Murry's attitude to the New Critics ranging from a Mortimer to a Leavis, was one of bewildered disagreement?

Murry's disagreement is understandable. Much of the New Criticism with its aloof and clinical approach to art was repellent to one who considered that any criticism was false unless it took its stand on a vital reciprocity between the critic and the work criticized. Yet Murry's stand in this matter has unjustly been attributed to a pedantic conservatism. This, however, is surely belied by his keen appreciation of the poetry of Dylan Thomas, the fiction of Scott Fitzgerald and J. D. Salinger, and also his initial sponsoring in the early twenties of Eliot, Hopkins and Lawrence when their work had few champions. A short review leaves little room for stating one's own attitude to this much-vexed question. For me, however, Dryden's stand seems both sane and sensitive. ' Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, meant a standard of judging well; the chiefest part of which is to observe those excellences which should delight a reasonable reader.'

BASIL PAYNE